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Alvan S. Ryan

Frost and Emerson: Voice and Vision

MANAGING EDITOR: R. W. WOOD; ASSISTANT EDITOR: J. BARRON; CONTRIBUTOR: PAUL A. ...
IT IS RELIABLY REPORTED that Robert Frost once called Ralph Waldo Emerson his favorite American poet. According to Reginald Cook, he has even called Emerson "the greatest Western poet." The same writer also quotes Frost as calling Emerson "a great disturber of the peace" and "profoundly subvertive." While these and numerous other statements by Frost attest his concern with Emerson's work, they furnish only fragmentary and peripheral evidence as to Frost's relationship to Emerson. What vision emerges from the total work of each writer? This is the significant question, yet it has been answered by critical judgments that are often flatly contradictory. G. R. Elliott, for example, interprets Frost's poetry as rejecting "the Emersonian anarchy." In defining the relation between Frost and poetic tradition, Elliott contrasts the romantic sentimentality of much nineteenth century poetry with Milton's "vision of a just and charitable Will, human but supernaturally given, alone able to subdue our Satanic selfishness and to build for us some greatness of society," and holds that Frost's poetry moves in the arc of this tradition. More recently, Yvor Winters has called Frost "a disciple without Emerson's religious conviction: Frost believes in the rightness of impulse. . . ." He is,

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says Winters, the spiritual drifter as poet, believing "that impulse is trustworthy and reason contemptible. . . . The principles which have hampered Frost's development, the principles of Emersonian and Thoreauistic Romanticism, are the principles which he has openly espoused. . . ."

Such disagreements are typical. Charles H. Foster writes that in Frost "there live on many of the central Emersonian convictions. . . . One misses in Frost the intellectual complication and the mystical intensity, but Frost is Emersonian." (Out of context, Foster's position seems close to that of Winters, but Foster's evaluation of both Frost and Emerson is fundamentally opposed to the notion that either substitutes impulse for reason, or that Frost is the spiritual drifter as poet.) Joseph Warren Beach, on the other hand, after devoting a chapter in his *Concept of Nature* to "Emerson's Nature-Poetry," quotes Frost's "West-Running Brook" as expressing a view of nature far different from Emerson's. "Surely never was nature," he writes, "invoked in more sober fashion; never was more modest claim made on the Power so awesomely regarded by Shelley and Emerson."

If one thinks of the divergent interpretations of each writer to be found in very recent statements, these earlier judgments are understandable. I think, for example, of Newton Arvin's "The House of Pain: Emerson and the Tragic Sense," in the Spring, 1959 issue of the *Hudson Review*, which goes far toward reconciling the older view of Emerson as bland optimist with the newer one that he resolutely faced the problem of evil. At the center of Emerson's vision Arvin discerns "perhaps the fullest and most authentic expression in modern literature of the more-than-tragic emotion of thankfulness." And in the most recent issue of the *Partisan Review* (Summer, 1959), Lionel Trilling prints in full the text of the address which last March roused—and why? one wonders—such a storm of protest. Trilling, with an engaging candor, told those assembled at Frost's eighty-fifth birthday dinner that he was one of Frost's most recently won admirers, and that *his* Frost was "a terrify-

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ing poet." At least Trilling's Frost, so much like the Frost that Jarrell gave us in his brilliant essay twelve years ago in the *Nation*, is another refreshing corrective to Malcolm Cowley's "case against Mr. Frost": the poet "who celebrates the diminished but prosperous and self-respecting New England of the tourist home and the antique shop in the abandoned gristmill."

I

Are Frost and Emerson poets in the same tradition? There are superficial similarities. They agree on the central importance of symbol and metaphor. They have a common preoccupation with rural subjects. They share a basic sense of "correspondences," though the differences here are also important. Their experiments with various meters and verse forms, their use of dialogue, their fondness for epigrammatic statement—both have written a great deal of gnomic verse—are also evident. The very titles of some of Frost's poems ("Mending Wall," "Storm-Fear," "The White-Tailed Hornet," "I Could Give All to Time," "Spring Pools") carry the mind back to Emerson's "The Snow-Storm," "Give All to Love," "Two Rivers," "The Humble-Bee," "The Rhodora." But all this may indicate no more than that they turn to similar subject matter. The question still remains—and must be answered, however briefly: What of their poetic theories and practice of poetry?

For Emerson the poet's role is essentially bardic and prophetic; invariably the definitions have religious overtones. Before he is maker, the poet is prophet, priest and seer. Through his imagination and intuitive powers he penetrates the hidden mystery of things, apprehends their transcendent or inner reality and announces his findings to men. All this is characteristic of the nineteenth century view of the poet's role. According to Emerson the poet "has no definitions, but . . . is commanded in nature, by the living power which he feels to be there present. . . . It is nature the symbol, nature certifying

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the supernatural . . . which he worships. . . ." These lines from Emerson's essay "The Poet" are echoed in "Nature," the essay in which the whole section on language reveals his sense of the poet's role:

It is not words only that are emblematic; it is things which are emblematic. Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact. . . . Who looks upon a river in a meditative hour and is not reminded of the flux of all things?

This is one side of Emerson's theory, the quintessentially transcendental or romantic note. Granting the need for further distinctions, it links him with Wordsworth, Shelley, Arnold and Whitman, and with others, such as Carlyle, who also claim for the poet the role of prophet, priest or seer.

There is nothing about Frost's conception of the role of the poet that is close to Emerson's. Frost has made few statements in prose on the poet's role, and when in his poetry he invokes the bardic attitude, as in "To a Thinker," it is with wry humor: "But trust my instinct, I'm a bard." He prefers to talk about the making of poems. As Lawrance Thompson remarks, "He has frequently suggested that he is particularly wary of hydra-headed Platonic idealism and of all those glorious risks taken by any who boldly arrive at transcendental definitions." Frost's comment on E. A. Robinson's Platonism is too well known to need quoting. But there is one passage in his "Education by Poetry" that brings Frost close to Emerson:

Greatest of all attempts to say one thing in terms of another is the philosophical attempt to say matter in terms of spirit, or spirit in terms of matter, to make the final unity. That is the greatest attempt that ever failed. We stop just short there. But it is the height of all poetry, the height of all thinking. . . .

Where Emerson's emphasis is on mysticism, or on some natural analogue of mystical experience closely allied to poetic intuition and inspiration, Frost is content to make a more modest and yet evocative statement:

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The figure a poem makes. . . . It begins in delight, it inclines to the impulse, it assumes direction with the first line laid down, it runs a course of lucky events, and ends in a clarification of life—not necessarily a great clarification, such as sects and cults are founded on, but in a momentary stay against confusion.

The difference in tone is not only indicative of the fuller commitment of Frost to poetry as first of all the craft of words; it also shows what has happened to the poet's sense of his role since the nineteenth century.

It is in the stress on emblem, symbol, and analogy that the theories of Emerson and Frost really meet. For Emerson the perception of analogy lies at the very root of poetry: "man is an analogist, and studies relations in all objects." The vehicle in poetry of this analogical habit is the symbol. Frost is essentially in agreement with this and he says so in his own way:

Poetry begins in trivial metaphors, pretty metaphors, "grace metaphors," and goes on to the profoundest thinking that we have. Poetry provides the one permissible way of saying one thing and meaning another.

But he goes on to say that "All metaphor breaks down somewhere. That is the beauty of it. It is touch and go with the metaphor. . . ." Emerson, on the other hand, is less suspicious of metaphor. His whole theory is characteristically less guarded than Frost's. He speaks of the poet's "intoxication" with symbols, and sees the poet not only as using symbols, but as perceiving "the independence of the thought on the symbol, the stability of the thought, the accidentality and fugacity of the symbol." In that one phrase, "the stability of the thought," there is a note that will account for one of the major differences between Emerson's poetry and Frost's. Just as in his theory Frost sees the poet as somehow "riding" the metaphor to see where it will carry him, so, in his best poetry, the thought is too deeply implicated in the metaphor to be called independent.

But the similarities evident in the two poets are not so important as the differences, which go deep into their artistic

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vision. There is a far greater difference, for example, between Emerson's and Frost's poetry than between their theories. And if organic structure and symbol are central to Emerson's theory, then paradoxically Frost's poetry embodies the theory far more fully than Emerson's. Nothing makes this clearer than a comparison of the structure, the use of image and symbol, and the handling of meter and rime in much of their poetry.

Emerson's poems do not often achieve immediacy. This is so in great part because of the *a priori* nature of many of them or because of their "panoramic" quality. As a result their impact is frequently vague and general as, for example, in "The Rhodora." On the other hand, many of Frost's poems, from no matter what period, achieve an immediacy through the poet's permitting his persons not merely to speculate or muse about experience but to see and to move through the medium of literal action—action which more often than not turns finally into symbolic representation or significant generalization. "Birches," "After Apple-Picking," "Tree at My Window," "Come In," "Directive" are clear examples of this procedure.

Whereas Emerson prefers to be suggestive, to develop a few images or a series of briefly sketched scenes, Frost characteristically structures a poem around a single symbolic event. Emerson's unifying principle is ideational, Frost's metaphorical. Emerson's "The Humble-Bee," while symbolic, is also generic; Frost, in contrast, focuses on a particular "White-Tailed Hornet" whose antics demonstrate to the eye-witness the fallacy of the theory of nature's unerring aim and instinct and the danger lodged in man's worship of such illusion:

As long on earth
As our comparisons were stoutly upward
With gods and angels, we were men at least, . . .
But once comparisons were yielded downward,
Once we began to see our images
Reflected in the mud and even dust,
'Twas disillusion upon disillusion.
We were lost piecemeal to the animals,

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Like people thrown out to delay the wolves.
Nothing but fallibility was left us. . . .

"Woodnotes" offers a good example of Emerson's use of the panorama or catalogue, as in these lines:

He saw the partridge drum in the woods;
He heard the woodcock's evening hymn;
He found the tawny thrushes' broods;
And the shy hawk did wait for him.

This double brace of birds is the game of an eclectic hunter who scatters his shot. But Frost, whether in "Dust of Snow," "A Minor Bird," or "The Oven Bird," prefers one bird at a time.

There is a singer everyone has heard,
Loud, a mid-summer and a mid-wood bird,
Who makes the solid tree trunks sound again.
He says that leaves are old and that for flowers
Mid-summer is to spring as one to ten.
He says the early petal-fall is past
When pear and cherry bloom went down in showers
On sunny days a moment overcast;
And comes that other fall we name the fall.
He says the highway dust is over all.
The bird would cease and be as other birds
But that he knows in singing not to sing.
The question that he frames in all but words
Is what to make of a diminished thing.

The habit of Frost's imagination is, in short, not like Emerson's. Rather, it is much closer to Thoreau's in its tenacious adherence to the inscapes of his world.

Stephen Whicher is right when he says that Emerson's poems "tend to slide off quickly from the fact to the idea—the cloying literariness of too much of his imagery and diction seems to represent an unsuccessful attempt to make up this deficiency of the sensuous in his verse—and they typically lack the organic, musical structure of the modern symbolist poem,

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since they can result only from playing off one symbol or meaning against another in a pattern of contraries." It is only in a very few of Emerson's poems that a single metaphor or symbolic action is made into a tightly organized and dramatic experience comparable to the best of Frost's. "Days" is an outstanding example.

Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.
I, in my pleachéd garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

Here is a poem of which Frost might say that the "words combine the idea all one way." The scene, the slow stately movement of the verse, and the exquisitely appropriate language all work together superbly—in a way not common in Emerson's poems.

II

The question to which I now wish to turn concerns the vision or interpretation of experience that emerges from the total work of each writer. This is the question that has excited the sharpest critical debates in recent years. To compare the whole vision of Emerson and Frost we must have a sense of the "center" of each writer's work, yet recent criticism shows how difficult it is to find this center. For example, any attempt to interpret Emerson's whole vision, or to assess the major emphasis in his work, hinges on how one sees the relation between the two Emersons—the early Emerson of "Nature," "The Divinity School Address," "The American Scholar" and "Self-Reliance," and the later Emerson of such essays as "Experi-

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ence" and "Illusions." The current critical practice is to stress the Yankee realism throughout his work, or to stress the later phase, in which there is a much profounder sense of the complexities of human experience, a recognition of evil and of limitation and a less ecstatic sense of the possibilities open to the active soul. If this new reading of Emerson is valuable it should not obscure the fact that it was the earlier Emerson of the stirring and oracular affirmations who made so strong an impact on his contemporaries. Even if he was, as Austin Warren penetratingly suggests in his essay "Emerson, Preacher to Himself," really counseling himself in such utterances, trying to compensate for the opposite bent in his own nature, he did make them in public, and they are at the root of what we have come to think of as Emersonianism. Had the dialogue we find in his early journals been conducted in public, Emerson's impact would have been far different. The stress in the public lectures and the essays is on intuition, the moral sentiment, immediate religious experience without mediation of history, institution (church), or sacraments, and on obeying the law of one's own nature—these affirmations gave him his central place among the transcendentalists.

Nor is it quite true to say that the total interpretation of Emerson shows us a man who holds opposing truths in dialectical tension and presents his thought in the form of dialogue. If there is a dialectic, it has to be in the mind of the reader who moves through the whole body of Emerson's work and becomes aware of the differing emphases in the early and the late essays. I do not find this dialectic in the early essays and lectures. The interpretation of Emerson by Stephen Whicher is immensely illuminating; he has recovered for us a whole facet of Emerson's work that adds a new dimension to his genius. But development in a writer does not equate with a rhetorical strategy or with a philosophical view that sees in a single vision the complexities of experience and conveys this vision throughout the body of his work.

To turn to a contemporary novelist, I would say that Robert

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Penn Warren has precisely the type of vision that Whicher attributes to Emerson, but this to me is an unromantic and un-Emersonian vision. To take another example, Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*—which contains so many of the doctrines found in "Nature," "The Divinity School Address" and "Self-Reliance"—is not, I grant, a genuinely dialectical work. Carlyle's voluntarism and his super-charged rhetoric scarcely allow room for consideration of opposing claims. Yet in *Sartor*, Carlyle is in some ways more dialectical than Emerson. Carlyle at least creates the fiction of an English editor commenting on Teufelsdröckh's clothes philosophy, however incomplete the fiction may be.

Newton Arvin's essay on Emerson, already cited, and the remarks of Trilling at Frost's birthday dinner further dramatize the problem. Arvin's essay in one sense corroborates Whicher's recognition that there is far more awareness in Emerson of the problem of evil than has usually been admitted, but Arvin's final conclusion—in this sense corrective of Whicher's—is that Emerson's vision at its best is in a great religious tradition, a tradition which sees beyond tragedy to affirm the ultimate meaning even of pain and suffering. Arvin, like Pollock in his excellent essay "The Single Vision," finds unsatisfactory the view that Emerson merely reiterated the importance of intuition and spontaneity. Yet he cannot agree that Emerson can justly be reinstated for modern readers as a writer with a tragic vision. Hence Arvin affirms, in the passage already quoted, that in Emerson we find "the more-than-tragic emotion of thankfulness." Here, to put it briefly, we find Arvin recognizing the modern demand that a writer deal adequately with the problem of evil, but also affirming the possibility of a vision which views evil and suffering in a larger perspective.

At about the time Arvin's essay appeared, Lionel Trilling made the address that precipitated so much criticism. What did Trilling mean by calling Frost a "terrifying poet"? Clearly, in the context, he meant a tragic poet. Opening with a reference

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to Frost's "Sophoclean birthday," he ended by saying directly to Frost: "When I began to speak I called your birthday Sophoclean and that word has, I think, controlled everything I have said about you. Like you, Sophocles lived to a great age, writing well; and like you, Sophocles was the poet his people loved most. Surely they loved him in some part because he praised their common country. But I think that they loved him chiefly because he made plain to them the terrible things of human life: they felt, perhaps, that only a poet who could make plain the terrible things could possibly give them comfort."

It would seem difficult to give any modern poet greater praise than to compare him favorably with Sophocles, and as one reads Trilling's address and remembers his authoritative book on Matthew Arnold, two lines of Arnold's praise of Sophocles come to mind: first, the familiar line referring to him as one "who saw life steadily and saw it whole," and second, the reference to him as "Singer of sweet Colonus and its child." It is on these two notes—in Trilling's words, the praise of "their common country" and the making plain "the terrible things"—that Trilling rests his comparison of Frost and Sophocles. If Trilling's view was to be questioned, one might expect it to be questioned most strenuously by admirers of Sophocles who find Frost not of such stature. Yet, ironically, it was certain admirers of Frost who repudiated what they incomprehensibly took as Trilling's attempt to minimize Frost's significance. By their interpretation, Frost is an optimistic and benevolent singer of the emotional joy to be felt in the presence of nature, and not a "terrifying poet" at all. Moreover, one of Trilling's critics suggested that he "come out of the Freudian wood" and that he might better have invoked Emerson as one who would move familiarly in Frost's world. The comment is in line with a widely-held view that both Emerson and Frost are amiable, inspiring, optimistic writers, who prefer to look on the pleasanter aspects of life. It is a view most effectively turned against the admirers of the two poets by a

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critic like Winters who holds that both Emerson and Frost turn away from the darker side of experience and abrogate their responsibility in favor of embracing a nostalgic vision of perfection.

Since it is clear that just as the more conventional estimates of the two writers bring them close together as optimists, and the severe criticism of them by Winters denigrates them for the same reason, so the more recent stress on their serious confronting of evil and limitation also brings them together, but in a very different way. To strike the balance among these three perspectives, and variations of them, is not easy. I only hope to make a start by taking a few focal points—their views of nature, of man in relation to society, of evil and suffering—for comparing Emerson's vision with Frost's.

Any understanding of Emerson's response to nature must begin with the religious attitudes central to all his thought. Rejecting the Calvinistic doctrine of total depravity and the rational theology of Unitarianism, he fastens on that same distinction between the transient and the permanent in religion made by Theodore Parker in America, Carlyle in England and numerous others in the mainstream of Transcendentalism. Like them, he fashions an eclectic synthesis of his own and turns to nature for the religious experience or sentiment. To this extent he is a transcendentalist. He rejects institutional Christianity in all its forms, while simultaneously affirming an intuitive religious experience open to all men. The most intense manifestation of this experience occurs when we attune ourselves to spiritual meanings in the contemplation of nature. This note leads, in Emerson's theory of poetry, and in much of his poetry and prose, to those sudden leaps from things, from actuality, to metaphysical affirmations. It is the flash of meaning, not the full steady confrontation of complex and ironic reality, that marks Emerson's whole attitude. And the flash of meaning he waits for is often for him a kind of "good news" which is no longer told in the churches. The affirmation, "God speaks, not spaketh" of the "Divinity School Address" is a clear

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link between all that he says of religion and all that he says of nature.

For Emerson the natural world mediates between man and spiritual realities. Nature is a revelation of the eternal in the things of sense, an avenue to the world of spirit. Granted that many passages in his writing seem to merge God and nature in a pantheistic way, there are numerous passages, from "Nature" on, where he makes a clear distinction between the creative God and His created universe. He calls the woods "the plantations of God"; he sees a farm as a "mute gospel." It is "a sacred emblem from the first furrow of spring to the last stack which the snow of winter overtakes in the fields."

The early essays emphasize the beneficence of nature; they are directed against an arid rationalistic theology that cuts man off from the rhythms of the natural world. The intuitions of joyous contemplation outweigh the cognizance of the darker side of nature. Even in the essay "Nature" there is, to be sure, the section on "Discipline" in which nature is seen as a discipline of the understanding, but the major stress is on an emotional and intuitive response. With the essay "Experience" the more rational response to the complexities of nature begins to dominate. Nature "is no saint." "She comes eating and drinking and sinning." And in "Fate," nature is "no sentimentalist. . . . The habit of snake and spider, the snap of the tiger and other leapers and bloody jumpers . . . these are in the system, and our habits are like theirs." In short, there is a clear shift in emphasis between Emerson's early and later interpretation of nature, and in the search for correspondences between man and nature which is one of his major concerns.

Between Frost's early and late poetry there is no such shift of emphasis from impulse or spontaneity to the recognition of evil and limitation as is found in Emerson's essays. Frost has kept the dialogue between feeling and thought circulating through nearly all of his poetry, most fully in his dramatic narratives, but also in his briefer lyrics. It is chiefly because of this that he is not Emersonian; his interpretations of experi-

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ence—in his own words, his momentary stays against confusion—are not those of either Emerson, though they are nearer to Emerson's later than to his earlier phase.

Consider the whole theme of the correspondences between man and nature, which is so important in Emerson's prose and in his poetry. Many of Frost's poems center on this theme, and while several of them simply celebrate a brief moment of contemplation, transmuting an actual experience into a significant form, the most characteristic are those which pose a dilemma and resolve it. In one of the two or three most illuminating essays yet written on Frost's work, Robert Penn Warren traces this double attitude of acceptance and rejection in "Stopping by Woods," "Into My Own," "Come In," "After Apple-Picking" and "Birches." In each poem, as Warren shows, the speaker is strongly moved by an impulse to identify himself with nature, yet there is also the drawing back toward a properly human self-definition. In "Stopping by Woods" there is the attractiveness, the seductive and dark beauty of the woods filling up with snow. But there are also the promises to be kept. The speaker shows his humanity by his full awareness of this beauty, but he defines it finally by returning, as Warren says, "to the world of action and obligation." "We can accept neither term of the original contrast, the poem seems to say; we must find a dialectic that will accommodate both terms." Warren shows that the same conflict runs through the other poems he discusses, and that their common theme is "the idea that the reward, the dream, the ideal, stems from action and not from surrender of action."

There is a similar tension and resolution in many of Frost's other poems, especially those which recognize the mutability of nature. This mutability theme is pervasive in Romantic poetry. Romantic identification with nature oscillates between joyful celebration of nature's beauty and melancholy awareness of its transience. The ecstasy is apparent in Emerson's "Nature" and in many of his poems. The melancholy is familiar in many of the poems of Shelley, Keats and Coleridge. Frost, unlike the

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Romantics, defines a human attitude in the face of nature's mutability and transience either by opposition, or by seeking in nature itself a type of analogy which the Romantic poets ignore. He does not invest so heavily in nature as they do. He watches the whole curve and rhythm of the natural world and builds the human response on the minor chord in nature, and often by the very opposition Warren stresses in his essay.

The minor chord is the suggestion even in nature itself of refusal to acquiesce in mutability. "The Oven Bird" may know that "mid-summer is to spring as one to ten," yet he continues to sing when other birds have ceased:

The question that he frames in all but words
Is what to make of a diminished thing.

Again, "Hyla Brook" flows loud and swift from melting snows and early rains, but by June has "run out of song and speed." Then there is left only the dry stream-bed asking, one might say, what to make of a thing diminished to nothing.

This as it will be seen is other far
Than with brooks taken elsewhere in song.
We love the things we love for what they are.

In "West-Running Brook" the central symbol is not the brook spending itself to nothingness, but the white wave that resists the lapsing away of the water:

It is from this in nature we were from
Long, long before we were from any creature.

A similar theme is expressed in small compass in the sonnet, "The Master Speed," in which the speed is, paradoxically, the capacity for thought and meditation, the ability to stand aside from contingency and reflect upon its meaning:

You can climb
Back up a stream of radiance to the sky,
And back through history up the stream of time.

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And you were given this swiftness, not for haste
Nor chiefly that you may go where you will,
But in the rush of everything to waste,
That you may have the power of standing still—
Off any still or moving thing you say.

This same definition of a human response through opposition to nature's mutability is also found in "A Leaf Treader." The speaker in the poem has been treading leaves until he is "autumn-tired." He momentarily entertains the impulse to identify his own mood with the decay of nature, but only to reject the impulse:

They tapped at my eyelids and touched my lips with
an invitation to grief.
But it was no reason I had to go because they
had to go.
Now up my knee to keep on top of another year
of snow.

Turning from the nature themes to the dramatic poems, we find a difference in the whole approach of Emerson and Frost to the meaning of human personality—a difference that is of great significance, however difficult it may be to sum it up briefly. To deal with their conceptions of the person and society, to estimate the extent to which Frost's "individualism" is like Emerson's would require a separate essay. Certainly Frost's attitude as expressed in his poetry is closer to what is called in contemporary thought "personalism" than it is to the nineteenth century type of individualism that Emerson represents.

This difference in attitude toward personality is apparent in the very style and technique of the two writers. The essay as a form in the hands of Emerson becomes a monologue in which we overhear him conversing with himself, or a sermon in which he exhorts us to a life of virtue and of sensitivity to the ever new meaning of the universe. He can be oracular and epigrammatic, can sum up his findings on Intellect, Love, Heroism,

Frost and Emerson: Voice and Vision

Self-Reliance, Character, without opposition. Frost, on the other hand, has put much of his finest poetry into the form of dialogue. By so doing, he achieves the full dialectical quality that Emerson misses or, at best, achieves but partially in his essays and in his poetry. Frost is willing to sacrifice "conclusions" for dramatic immediacy and realism. He is more tentative but also more objective; the play of other personalities and the tone and cadences of other voices than his own run through all his work. The search for conclusions, for resolutions of conflicting thoughts and emotions, the impact of grief and loneliness, all are dramatized by Frost through the interplay of individual human beings.

The difference in their understanding of personality is also apparent in the contrast between Emerson's recurrent exhortation that we must transcend personality and Frost's tenacious adherence to the particularity of things as well as of people. Emerson's essay on "Love" follows Plato's "Symposium" in describing love as ultimately transcending personality and becoming love of the universal. Platonism can, to be sure, be harmonized with the Christian concept of love of God and of neighbor, but Emerson's essay does not succeed in harmonizing them. It is a cold theoretical performance, one with which even Emerson was dissatisfied. It represents a form of Platonism which Frost rejects both explicitly in prose statements and implicitly in his poetry. Love in Frost's poetry is the love of men and women for one another, for beauty, for knowledge, for things made well and with an eye to function.

It is in Frost's dramatic narratives, notably those of *North of Boston*, that his attitude toward experience is seen to be least Emersonian. There is in these poems such a full confrontation of disappointment, frustration, and failure as is not to be found in Emerson's work. In tone they have usually been called pathetic rather than tragic, yet in most of them there is a movement toward self-definition and self-knowledge that is tragic or close to the tragic. Few of Frost's protagonists are passive victims, nor do they escape into a romantic dream-

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world; we see them at a moment of crisis confronting the existential situation in all its ironic reality. And they have the integrity that comes with the awareness, however dim, that more than circumstance is involved in their trials. Somehow they have chosen, and would not have it otherwise. The title of Frost's early poem, "The Trial by Existence," suggests the underlying theme of many of these poems. The fact is that the mode of these poems is closer to that of the metaphysicals than to that of the romantics. The "ideal" is entangled and inter-fused in the seemingly commonplace and fortuitous. For example, the action of "In the Home Stretch," from *Mountain Interval*, is simply the delivery of the furniture and belongings of a middle-aged couple from the city to the farm, where they intend to settle down for good. But the banter, the gestures, the implied criticism of their action by the furniture movers arouse second thoughts, doubts, and forebodings in the two moving to the darkness and solitude of the country. The poem lays bare the possibility of their resigning themselves to despair. The wife is tempted to; the husband keeps interposing possibilities for the future, and looks forward to inspecting "pasture, mowing, well, and brook" the next morning. The theme might be stated somewhat as follows: contentment and happiness require a certain activity of the will, a refusal to let mood drive one toward despair. The husband and wife have fashioned for themselves an image of the personal meaning of this moving to the country, but the scorn of the young city boys for country life, the oncoming darkness, the bleakness and emptiness of the house make them suddenly question the reasons that have led them to their choice. But when the men have left, they regain their composure, though the husband confesses: "They almost shook me." What is significant in such a poem is Frost's full confronting of this sense of isolation in men, and his recognition of the human need to master the imagination in its shifting moods.

Consideration of such poems as Frost's "A Servant to Servants," "The Witch of Coös," "Design," "Acquainted with the

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Night," "Once by the Pacific" would give a fuller awareness of that element in his work which Trilling calls "terrifying." Insofar as this aspect of Frost's work has been minimized, Trilling did a great service to criticism in emphasizing it so effectively and so movingly. Yet these poems and others similar in tone and theme are not the whole of Frost. His poetry spans a wide spectrum. Celebration of form, radiance and design in the natural order, and the lyric or dramatic evocation of those moments when man discovers joy and reward in his work are at one end of the spectrum. At the other end are those poems which Trilling has in mind as being the most significant work of "his Frost." My own Frost would be closer to R. P. Warren's than to either of these extremes. The interplay and the tension between the human and the non-human, the sense of a goodness in the natural order which evokes and challenges human response without fulfilling the need for a properly human self-definition—this is the vision, as it seems to me, that subsumes, or perhaps connects, both extremes. And largely because it has the dialectical and dramatic quality which Warren emphasizes, it is an unEmersonian vision. Or to speak more accurately, if this Frost bears some resemblance to Emerson, it is not at all to the Emerson most critics have in mind when they compare the two. Rather, Frost is, in the poems of the darker vision, like the Emerson recovered by such critics as Stephen Whicher, and, in the more serene lyrics, like Arvin's Emerson of "the more-than-tragic emotion of thankfulness." This constitutes the poetic ground on which Frost and Emerson really meet.

Robert Frost

SOMEWHAT DIETARY

We live but to discriminate
'Twixt what to love and what to hate.
Because discrimination reigns
Is why there's such a need of brains.
We learned from the forbidden fruit
For brains there is no substitute.
"Unless it's sweetbreads," you suggest
With innuendo I detest.
You want me to confess in ink
I did employ sweetbreads to think
Till I was caught and put to shame.
I wasn't half as much to blame
As was my social science set,
My brothers of the Calumet,
The liberal progressive party
With whom, in being modern-arty,
Sweetbreads-for-brains, their slogan, had
A vogue amounting to a fad.
To sweetbreads on our club menu
They all ascribed my high I.Q.

Joanna Ostrow

The God's House

THEY GOT AS FAR as the street-light and stopped. Mary had never been so frightened in her life. Her friends stood next to her, calm and solid, waiting for her to go on. But they were no help; she had to go alone. And the teacher was there, in that house across the street.

The lamp-post threw a slanted yellow light across the three girls as they stood on the corner, and all about them were the dark-blue shadows, the keen smell, the rattling leaves of November. June and Elizabeth stopped obediently, like dogs at heel, when Mary stopped, but now they were getting cold. "Go ahead," said June from behind an orange-striped scarf that wound up her skinny neck and chin and face clear to the nose. "Don't stop here."

"I gotta study." Mary ruffled her notebook to the *Art* section and held the loose-leaf pages to the light, squinting to read. But she hardly saw the notes. There, across the street, in that third house to the right. There. There she had always wanted to go. Frightened, she tipped the notes into the light. "I gotta study," she said. "I don't know Mexican Art yet."

"Here? Now? You're crazy, it's cold," said June. Elizabeth shivered; her socks were slipping down inside her shoes and, fat in a brown winter coat, she grunted over to pull them up again. Next to Elizabeth, Mary was changeable and dark as

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silk. "You don't have to study," said Elizabeth. "You know it better than anybody. Come on, let's get cocoa."

"I can't, she didn't answer the phone."

"Call her again," said June. "We'll freeze."

"She's not home," said Mary. "She said call at nine but I called twice and she's not home. I know she isn't. Everything's going wrong."

"So she's not home. Let's go." June sniffled into her scarf. "It's cold."

"No," said Mary.

"Then we don't have to wait for you," said Elizabeth. "I'm hungry."

"Please!" said Mary.

"Look," said June, her small shadow half-out of the lamp-light, edges whipping in the wind. Her voice was wise and flat. "Look, she said call tonight, right? So wait a while, inside somewhere, and call again. She's late getting back, that's all. What's with you?"

"She's home," said Mary. "She doesn't want to answer when I call."

"Don't be funny," said June. "Come on."

"Let's get cocoa," said Elizabeth. Down the next block, the blue neon of a drugstore cut into the dark street, and they turned out of the lamplight towards it, walking fast, holding themselves tight against the cold. Mary looked back at the teacher's house, but followed, trying to catch the dim light of windows and hallways, peering at her notes. She saw dates scribbled and colored postcards clipped on for study: temples and Mexican masks, priest pictures with quetzal-feather hats of green and purple, ruined palaces overgrown with trees like snarled hair. They sent a dark feeling through her, those postcards, there on the well-known city street at night. But she knew them. She wasn't going to know them any better. The temples carved in stone snakes were clear before her eyes: they were strange, built by strange people before Columbus came.

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But they were sweet and sunny compared with the teacher. Mary didn't know her, not at all.

Monster faces, red-green-white with stone tongues, looked up from the page, and Mary's face looked down—full cheeks, baby mouth, eyes with a begging look in them.

"You'll never know it," said June as they walked. "I don't know it yet, and I took the test three weeks ago. No other teacher gives stuff like this."

"We're doing Latin America," said Mary. "It fits." "Fits you, maybe," said June.

"What was the test like?" said Mary, who didn't care at all.

"You know. First question: give the whole history of the Maya and Aztec Empires through their art. Throw in astronomy if you can. Take five minutes. Cheating allowed—" she imitated the teacher's too-loud strange voice—"I'm sure none of you will pass otherwise."

"She's crazy," giggled Elizabeth. "That's college work."

"She hates us," said Mary. "She hates us, I know."

As they walked Mary smelled winter, and felt the wind trying to blow her out of herself. It touched her eyes and fingertips, cold as this woman she was going to meet. "I wish the school would fire her," said Elizabeth.

"Oh, no!" said Mary.

After a silence, June spoke suddenly in the dark. "I'm going to a college where there are boys," she said. "If I can live through this stupid private school. Then I won't have to learn this stuff, you'll see. And I'll wear lipstick every day."

They walked on, quiet, thinking of it. Except for Mary, who squinted at her book. There the light edged out a bright-colored card, the statue of a god in red sandstone. Calm and self-contained, he sat in front of a turquoise drape, wearing a crown of corn. She hated him. He stared down his old high nose, eyes half-shut, and he wouldn't look at her. His stone eyes saw some distant Aztec rites and dreams, and he kept them to himself. She wanted to touch his fine face, but he raised his hand, palm out: "That is the gesture *fear not*," the

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teacher had said, but Mary knew it meant *keep your distance*. She reached out, and he drew back: *go away*. So she hated him. She hated even a statue that drew away from her.

She'd seen him that afternoon in class. The teacher lectured with slides on the wall and the class squinted to take notes by the glowing colors, red and blue-green. The black shades were drawn and the room was dark, dust-motes humming in the beam from the projector. The teacher's voice kept them awake. She had a deep voice, droning loud, then breaking to a whisper, loaded with an accent not German, not British, but strange; sharp as cut glass and black as velvet:

"This is a Maize God. He was found in Copan about 800 A.D. He lives in a world of his own, indeed.

"I don't expect you to remember him," she said good-humoredly, "but I will give you hell anyway—" Mary closed her eyes, embarrassed for her. When the teacher tried to talk casually she sounded like a machine trying to learn but giving a bad imitation of human speech. But she talked on, and the god sat there in glowing colors on the wall, impassible. To Mary, sleepy in the shut-in people-smelling air, her heavy voice came back from his thick stone lips.

Through the dark the bell rang and the teacher snapped on the lights. "All right. No, wait," she remembered with disgust. "I have papers to return. I've probably lost the half of them."

And Mary realized suddenly: she had to make up that test. She had been absent. Now she'd have to go up to the teacher, and face her, and speak to her; and the teacher would have to answer back.

Ruffling through test-sheets the teacher called names, handing back papers. "Shockingly bad," she said coldly to Elizabeth. "Very poor. Temple of the Jaguars? Temple of the Serpents, I told you. Serpents. Snakes. My God, can't you tell a snake when you see it?"

I could, thought Mary. I wish she'd ask me if I could. Then the papers were gone, and the class filtered out. Mary slid her coat on and silently, insides turning to hot water, stepped up to

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the desk. Proud, bright as a bird with soft black hair and white skin, yet bent from the shoulders like a bird about to peck, the teacher drew away and turned her back. There was a smell of sweat about her. Perched on the desk, scuffling up notes, she ignored the girl utterly. She's beautiful, thought Mary. There are special things—special songs and special dresses and special days that hit you hard. This is one of the special people.

And she was greedy for the teacher, as a baby loves a special candy. Her whole body stirred towards her and drew back, excited and afraid.

The teacher looked up: her black eyes watched the girl for a moment with no interest, half-closed, and then withdrew. Her personality retreated and her eyes just had no focus in the world that Mary saw. And as the teacher drew back, the girl felt a stab of anger and neglect. "Please, may I speak to you?"

"What have you got to say?"

"I never took the test," said Mary. "I was absent that day."

"What is your name?"

"Mary Moore."

"Miss Moore." She sighed. "Oh, my God. You will have to make it up, you know. I cannot mark you on classwork; you sit there, dumb, just as silent as the rest."

"I know the work," said Mary. The teacher was bored, remote as a stone; and the more she withdrew the more Mary wanted her, wanted to hit her and cry, to bite her, shake her—look at me! Look at me! I'm just as important as you. Look at me! But the teacher simply would not look at her. "I'll take the test any time," said Mary hopelessly. "I like the Mexican part."

"What a bother. I have no time free here at school to watch you. I'm afraid you will have to come to my house."

Mary stood in shock.

"You'll have to come tonight," said the teacher with distaste. "I shall be out until nine. Call me then. You will look at some slides and tell me what you know—very little, I'm sure—about Mexican Art."

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She turned away from Mary, who watched the bent, vital back for a moment and then left the room. The hall outside was lit with a bright, butter-yellow light and tacked with posters. Her friends were there, June winding the scarf about her chin, Elizabeth pulling up her grubby socks. In the over-heated hall there was the smell of wool and a hint of the cold outdoors. "She's horrible," said June. "She's the worst marker in the world."

"I have to go to her house tonight," said Mary slowly, "to take the test."

They stared at her. "To her house!" said Elizabeth.

"Wow," said June. "I never was to the teacher's *house*."

"She must like you," said Elizabeth.

"No, she hates me," started Mary, but June cut in: "Wouldn't want her to like *me*. She's a weirdie."

"Well, she hates me," said Mary, voice tight. "I don't know why she asked me. And I'm scared of the test. I don't know anything!" Something was going to happen at the teacher's house; she knew it. Things were going to turn wrong. "I'll fail," she said.

"You? You're crazy. Here, I know," said June, her wise little face wrapped up in stripes, the wool damp with her breathing. "Don't be scared. We'll stay with you all afternoon and read you questions. Then we'll walk you over later. We'll even wait for you, after. Okay?"

"I don't care," said Mary.

"What's wrong with you? Come on."

"Sure," said Elizabeth, working at her right sock with the toe of her scuffed left shoe. "We'll go down to the pizza place for supper, and go somewhere after for ice cream."

"Can't help it," said Mary. "I'm scared."

"You're crazy," said June. "You drive me crazy. Let's study at my house, yours is too far away." They went out into the icy air.

But now it was past nine at night, and they were walking down the dark street. Mary had called twice, and the teacher

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hadn't answered the phone. They hurried towards the drugstore, leaning against the wind. As they came close their faces went greenish in the neon light and they stopped and sighed, looking in the windows, steaming breath on the icy glass. There were bright colored posters inside: nail-polish ads, and lipstick, and deodorant. Foamy pink girls, with apple-blossom lips and nails; blue-and-white lacy girls, blonde, dewy with deodorant and cool as crystal. "I'm going to look like that," said Elizabeth.

"Which?" said June. "The dark one or the fair one?"

"The one in pink," said Elizabeth.

"Three years to go," said June fiercely. "Then college. Where there are *boys*. Our school makes me sick, with this crazy Art and Latin-American survey and French for young ladies. It's stupid."

Mary didn't hear. Her nose and fingertips were numb, and her mind was frozen to the moment when the ringing phone would click, and the teacher's voice would answer at the other end. Soon she would go to the phone booth and call again. It was twenty minutes after nine.

But inside the drugstore it was warm and bright. She smelled the drugstore smell of pills and perfume, saw the glitter of counter-tops and chrome, the gold winking of compacts in a case, the golden-green and brown of perfume bottles on the shelf, and the cold left her as her mind began to work. The cocoa foamed and steamed, sweet whipped cream swirling in the brown. Elizabeth turned the pages of a fashion magazine, and the silken pictures drew them all. Even Mary forgot what was to come. And as they looked, the autumn-colored tweeds, the satins and brocades, the faces with half-closed big eyes, shadowy cheekbones, and feathers of hair on their foreheads, struck them to the heart with what was possible.

"I'm going to look like that," said Elizabeth, pointing to a model with a swan's neck and tendrils of hair piled high. They crowded over the page, dulling the slick finish with chocolate steamy breaths. "When?" asked Mary.

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"Next year," said Elizabeth. "I can't wait till college."

"We'll all look like that," said June.

"Tell us again," said Elizabeth to Mary. "One more time. What would you wear if you were going to a dance?"

Mary took a deep breath. Gods, priests and teachers were gone for a moment while she imagined for them: "I'd have lace underwear. Pure silk. Underpants, and a bra—" an exalted look came over their faces. "A strapless bra, and a slip with a foot of lace at the hem. All slithery, in pale yellow. . . ."

They sighed, listening, sitting there in stubby winter coats, mittens crumpled and grimy in their pockets. The elegance of long necks and lace floated across the counter, in the steam from the cocoa. Mary told them:

"I'd wear colored stockings—pale green filmy stockings." They shivered. "And white satin shoes with sparkles on the strap, toes so pointed you could kill somebody with them, and heels as thin as a needle!"

"Dancing shoes," nodded Elizabeth, watching her scuffed loafers change.

"And my dress," said Mary. "My dress. It would be thick white satin, with a high waist and a sort of—sort of a *sculptured* skirt," she decided, reading copy off the glossy page. "It would be all over sparkles, and I'd wear long diamond earrings."

"Rhinestone," said June. "Diamonds *cost*."

"Rhinestones, but long. And I'd wear long white gloves, lots of green eye make-up, *Jewels in the Snow* lipstick, and slinky perfume."

"You can't have *Jewels in the Snow*," said June. "That's my shade."

"Take *Renaissance Bronze*, Mary," said Elizabeth eagerly.

"Okay," said Mary. "And I'd have my hair piled high as *that*!"

They were happy. Elizabeth clawed at her hair, swirling it up. It fell, but a great glory swept through them, and the future broke into diamonds. "Life is great!" sang out Elizabeth, tossing her lank hair upwards again.

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"That's what it means to be a woman," said June, mysterious. "That's what a woman is."

But then Mary remembered, and a thrust of fright knocked the diamonds askew. They went down in pieces like glass, and behind them were doubts—and a suspicion. The picture of lipstick and lace was suddenly crooked, like a fun-house mirror, and things were slowly turning wrong. Silently, she slid down off the counter-stool, taking her notebook. June and Elizabeth giggled behind her, turning pages, as she walked towards the phone booth in the hard white light. "I'd wear red velvet," she heard June say as she closed the folding doors. "It's more my type."

By now she knew the number. The phone rang three times, and the teacher picked it up: "Hello."

"This—is Mary Moore."

"Who?"

"Mary Moore. I was supposed to call before."

"Oh, my God," said the teacher, as if it were a bad joke. "It's you. I had forgotten. What are we to do with you now?"

Mary couldn't answer. "You might as well come over. Are you nearby?"

"Yes," said Mary, regretting it.

"Very well," said the teacher, and hung up.

Mary slowly folded the phone-booth door back. Something was going to happen, and it was going to be bad. "Good luck!" called Elizabeth and waved as Mary left the drugstore for the November cold outside. June was looking down at the picture of a pale-blue mink coat.

Mary walked up the dark street, turned the corner by the lamp-post, and walked up the brownstone steps of the teacher's house. The entrance-walls were mustard yellow, cold, and the swinging brown-shaded bulb lit a row of blotched and rusty mail-boxes. The curtains on the inside door hung grey and stiff with dirt. Mary's own house smelled of clean laundry; this one smelled of burnt fat, and the smells wrapped her round, leading her on to something strange. She rang the third-floor bell

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and walked through to a staircase with dingy ceilings and half-lit doors to the right and left. At the third-floor landing she stopped, and waited. After a long time the teacher opened the door.

"Oh," she said. "Come in."

But Mary stepped back: the smell of sweat curled out the door to meet her, a sweat-smell bitter and sharp that made her eyes burn. Behind the stooped-over woman Mary saw a clutter of books, papers, periodicals, brown and grimy in the dull light, heaped and scattered crosswise on the dirty floor. Trying to breathe through her mouth, she followed the teacher in. If the woman knew she was there, she took no notice. Mary had to break in and challenge those exasperating eyes. Her mind was muddled with the strangeness and the smell, so her boldest thought spoke out: "Why did you say, 'Oh, my God, it's you?'"

"I beg your pardon?" Startled, the teacher turned and for a second looked at her squarely, eyes alert. Mary felt her stomach turn over inside.

"It made me feel terrible," said Mary, making a joke out of it. The teacher watched her a moment more, and there was tension like a tight line between them. Then she withdrew, that utter removal of personality from the present—Mary felt as if a spotlight had been snapped off—and refused to acknowledge the girl again. Before, in class, she'd been indifferent; now she was guarded, frightened even—she looks like I went after her with an axe, thought Mary. It's no use. She hates me. She really hates me. Nobody ever hated me at all! Suddenly she wanted to get away, to run, to get out blind and quick. "Mm," grunted the teacher, turning away. "I was packing books."

What does that mean? Why didn't she answer the phone? But Mary followed again down a hall made narrow by books stacked odd-corners and sloppy. The smell pressed in with the walls.

They passed a tiny kitchen and came to the front room, muddled with books, with a studio couch only for furniture,

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lopsided, brown-covered. The smell was strongest here, and the room was hot: Mary started sweating in her coat. She caught titles of books along the walls: *Etruscan Art*, *Persian Miniatures*, *The Kings of Assyria*; she shivered. They sounded like ivory, and curved swords, and horsemen carved in stone. But the smell of sweat hung in the room, that lonely smell—you clean up if you have friends, thought Mary, or someone to live with. She could almost see it, smoky blue and curling like incense over the books. She had to get out, while she still wanted to.

Bored, the teacher rummaged a card table out from behind some books and set it up before the couch, putting down yellow test-sheets, a pencil, and a stack of lantern-slides. "Here are the slides the class used. I leave you on your honor not to look at the titles," she said wearily. "Give name of work, culture, date, and describe it. Take five minutes each." Then without having looked once at Mary, she left the room. Mary wanted her to come back, and then was afraid that she would.

Silence flowed about her, and heat, and the smell of sweat. She felt scattered and dreamy, fuzzy as she sat down at the table, leaving her coat on for protection; she couldn't point her mind at the slides as usual and start the test. She yawned, and thought she was asleep. Across the room two windows with no shades or curtains gave on blackness. Moving her head, Mary saw her reflection, crooked as in a trick mirror, nod across the sheer black pane. No street lights, no window lights, no sound of cars below: the house was wrapped in nothing. Mary fiddled with the pencil; this bare room made her lonely. She had never been so lonely in her life.

Then with a cold small shock she remembered the test, and forced her mind to move. Holding the first slide up to the dun-colored light she peered, guessed, checked the title to make sure she'd been right, and bent to the yellow paper. Her pencil scratching was the only sound in the room. The next slide was the Maize God. As she saw him, red-gold and wrapped in him-

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self, she thought she might reach him now, but she was afraid. He was too strange.

Then the teacher came in, with a glass of milk in her hand. "Here," she said too loudly, putting the glass down. "Thanks," whispered Mary, but the teacher hurried out. Mary put her hand out, drew back, then took the milk and found it dirty. The glass was greasy and a film of black floated on the white milk. It smelled sour, but she sipped it anyway and then drank it down.

She was identifying an Aztec snake, coiled sluggish and ugly into a ball of stone, when the teacher came back. This time, before her in both hands, she held a dress.

Mary drew back when she saw that dress. All the sweat-smell of the room gathered and haloed about it, hanging over her thin arms: maroon and brown, grey and dirt-colored, a draping of ugliness—the ugly focus of a bare and dirty room.

"This dress. Would it fit you?" asked the teacher in her droning too-loud voice, almost but not quite like a woman speaking.

"I don't know," said Mary, mind spinning. "I think it would be—too short. In—in the waist."

The teacher peered at the dress, like a bird pecking. "What size do you wear?"

"Twelve," said Mary, too frightened to lie. It looked like a perfect fit. The teacher smoothed the dress down against her bent-over body, slicing Mary through with her black eyes.

"Help me pack my books," she said awkwardly. "And you shall have this dress."

A world was open to Mary now, and she couldn't stand it.

"I'd be glad to help you," she said, not knowing what else to say, "*without* the dress!"

But then the teacher backed off again, unable to carry it through, and shut herself away. "Mm," she said. "Well." She draped the dress over her arm and went out.

Mary sat sweating, but her hands were cold as she re-settled her pencil and went back to the Aztec snake. Her student's

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mind snapped out the answers in spite of herself. She felt like laughing with relief, but she didn't know why. Beyond, the curtainless windows gave on nothing, and the books sat in a fog of dirt. There was no sound from the teacher, no sign; she didn't come back. And Mary knew she would not. She felt she was saved from something black; at the same time it was a bitter loss.

When she finished the test she waited, to be polite, but she knew the teacher would never come; so she gathered the papers, anchored them with slides and the empty milk glass, then took her notebook and left, alone.

The air was dark blue and hit her like cold water as she came down into the street. Halfway past the drugstore, walking on, she saw her friends inside. She had really forgotten them. Unwillingly, she went in. Elizabeth looked up from the fashion magazine: "How was it?"

"I don't know," said Mary. She didn't sit down. "She gave me the slides with the labels on," she said.

"Yeah? Boy, is she crazy. Did you look at them?"

"Only afterwards."

"You're crazy," said June. "I woulda looked before." She flipped the fashion pages. "Look what we found—you never saw anything like it!" She showed Mary a swirl of brocade, pink satin, silver and gold; the model's hair was piled and curled, gold as the dress. June and Elizabeth sighed.

"I want to go home," said Mary.

"Huh? But we waited for you. You wanted us to. Come on, stay and look at the pictures. June knows something else she'd wear to the dance."

"I don't care," said Mary, heading for the door. "It's late." Outside, wind touched the drugstore windows and rattled them softly.

"Hey," said June, looking up for the first time. "What's with you?"

"I don't know," said Mary from the bottom of her heart. As she opened the door, the wind and bits of leaves blew in.

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The door swung slowly behind her with a shimmer of reflection on the glass, odds-on like a fun-house mirror, then closed.

"What is with her?" asked June, a wrinkle on her wise little face.

"Oh, her. She's crazy," said Elizabeth. "You always *say* she's crazy. Hey, look at that!" The page she turned was blossom-pink, and the model wore pale green fingernails.

"But she scared me a little, kind of," said June.

"No, look," said Elizabeth. "Green. When are you going to wear green fingernails?"

"Next year," said June absently.

"Let's have cocoa again," said Elizabeth. She bent down to pull up her sock. "I'm going to a college where there are *boys*," she said.

They sat over the glittering counter, dreaming of lipstick. Outside, it was dark.

William Carlos Williams

15 years later

on seeing my own play
Many Loves
on the stage for the first time

I recall
many a passage
of the original con-

versations with my
patients, especially the
women, myself

the interlocutor
laying myself bare for them
all here

in the play but who will
take the trouble
to evaluate

the serious aspects of
the case? One
of the actors by

dint of learning the lines
by heart
has come to me

his face aglow open mouthed
a light in his eyes:
nothing more

Allan Brick

The Madman in his Cell: Joyce, Beckett, Nabokov and the Stereotypes

I

THE MOST PERCEPTIVE understanding of the imprisonment of the public mind by mass culture is achieved not by sociologists, psychologists, or semanticists, but by modern novelists. Seeing the very words of their consciousness destroyed and the understanding of their readers paralyzed, they fight back, centering their art upon exposure of the crime.

Compared with their predecessors, modern novelists fill an entirely unique role. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century novelists portrayed accepted norms of social relationship and individual behavior, giving moral instruction by refining man's understanding of his position within those norms. Victorian novelists, faced with expanding, unexplored depths of human character, began to challenge automatic assumptions about the nature of man and of his role in society. Thus there developed a natural enmity between protagonists, who tended toward rebellion, and society, seen largely as a prohibitive bourgeoisie. Such novels of the mid-century as *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre*, *Vanity Fair*, *The Scarlet Letter*, and *Moby Dick* dramatize the conflict between the liberated indi-

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vidual and the restrictive society. But, once established, the doubting of external norms began to undermine accepted hypotheses about human nature—themselves reflections of outward social conditioning. Pre-moderns like Meredith, Hardy, and—to a degree—George Eliot began to question the idols of true love and true loyalty, even while making use of such broad areas of common experience as work, familial attachments, romantic love, to which they could allude in the expectation that readers would respond with lively comprehension. To evoke these areas novelists could rely on certain words and phrases—until the nexus between experience and language was corrupted by the vulgarization of both in the escapist reading provided by mass media. This corruption did not occur immediately during the 1850's, when mechanical improvements suddenly brought cheap reading to the masses, partly because Victorian publishers themselves combined to throttle all attempts to vulgarize reading. More important, the common man's reading was still largely integrated with his real life: reading extended his experience into a world as complex and demanding as the one in which he lived.

With the approach of the twentieth century, the increasingly desperate optimism of sensitive intellectuals gave way to nihilism—an admission that the outward world and man's position in it were essentially unknowable. And the common man, "a stranger and afraid / in a world [he] never made," abandoned all attempts to relate himself to outward realities, committing himself instead to sentimental illusions that could make life unperplexing, bearable. Now he, and many 'intellectuals' as well, read not to confront and perhaps master the horrors of real experience, but to secure himself from them in an ersatz world where he could be romantically triumphant.

Recognizing the degeneration of popular taste and desperately abhorring the prostitution it imposes, the modern artist draws away from "popularity," feeling "success" to be proof that his work is banal. One can almost see Joyce erecting barriers between his art and the popular audience so as to get

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rid of all readers except those who deserve, who are equipped, to read his books. The danger, of course, lies in reducing deserving readers to a very small group indeed. But perhaps the point is not so much that Joyce is snobbishly eliminating inadequate readers as that he is trying to remove all possibilities of careless reading. The very nature of Joyce's statement makes easy understanding on *any* level impossible; realities of human experience are communicated only insofar as the reader is divested of customary allegiances, restrained from automatic response. The demand upon this reader is for wide and profound knowledge, for clear and relentless thought, and for moral courage sufficient to look directly at the complexities, the horrors, the absurdities of contemporary existence. Joyce adopted to-hell-with-the-audience tactics—already used by James and soon to be used by Faulkner—thus forcing the reader of *Ulysses*, if he would be rewarded, to read closely and repeatedly. Such rewards, once they come, are proportionate to the effort; but there is little offered in the way of preliminary enticement. Joyce's predicament becomes fully clear only in light of Shakespeare's relations with his audience and Dickens' with his; both writers were comparatively secure in their positions. They provided many levels of meaning because they had no fear about pandering to popular taste; each pandered readily, for it was part of the job. But that popular taste which Dickens could manipulate and even elevate has since spread ever wider and sunk ever lower, abysmally lower than Little Nell. It is a matter of opinion just how successful Joyce is in his attempt to ensure vigorous and rewarding reading; but, clearly, any serious modern artist must make some such attempt.

The highly-comic *Ulysses* examines the corruption of popular taste, portraying Gerty, Bloom, and Molly as representatives of the reading public, and coming to the highly uncomic conclusion that the artist is a voice of the past. Joyce laughs at his artist-priest-without-a-Church, Stephen, but the laugh makes more apparent his grim conclusion: works of art have no place in the library of today's Practical Man. The popular

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mind cannot understand real meaning; and art, insofar as it has real meaning, cannot seriously speak the language of the popular mind. Destroyed are not only the words but also the general forms of life which they convey: "love," "marriage," "woman," lost in the clichés of headlines, movies, and advertisements, are hardly more available as subject matter than as diction. Today the artist spends a vast amount of creative force simply in eluding stock responses, frequently limiting himself to special and perhaps unimportant experience which has little relation to social realities. But in *Ulysses* Joyce went on the offensive, not evading but exploding the stereotypes at the linguistic and conceptual levels; hence his constant punning, his turning inside-out of all cliché forms. His achievement was not only to mock but also to define the stereotypes that imprison the popular mind—all the way from lowbrow "Raoul" to highbrow "Lawn Tennyson."

In *Public Opinion* Walter Lippmann tells us that people live in a pseudo-environment, a surrounding of simplifications, of stereotypes, which makes it possible for them to confront reality and still maintain a healthy arrogance. Without this pseudo-environment people in a given culture could not live; the complexity of existence if experienced directly would weigh in upon them and destroy them psychologically. Thus, says Lippmann, this pattern of stereotypes is not a falsification, rather it is a necessary distillation. But because modern reality is so fearfully infinite, man clings blindly to *oversimplifications* rather than to vital forms of perception. He needs the pictures of how to think and how to feel presented by television, movies, magazines, and press—pictures which conjure a life more intense than real life and, because predictable, a life that is safe as well. Gone are legitimate myths and icons—simplifications which *are* connected with first-hand existence; no more can the artist meet his audience upon mutual grounds.

Ulysses' ironic comparison of the *Odyssey* with modern norms comments upon this situation, the most specific analysis occurring in the chapter about modern Nausicaä, Gerty Mac-

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Dowell. From the point of view of complex reality, the point of view given by Joyce, Gerty is a nonexistent person. What identity she has is simply cultural veneer; underneath there is anesthetized dread of that complex outer world which proves constantly how small she is, how ignorant, how unsuccessful. Unconsciously terrified, she clings to the stereotypes so readily available, and for payment must live with her heart and mind turned inside out, her every feeling and thought (there *is* no action) outwardly ordered. Gerty, like all of Joyce's young women, strikes the postures of sentimentalist fiction, becoming her own novelist and heroine, choosing from her environment recognizable forms:

His dark eyes fixed themselves on her again and drinking in her every contour, literally worshipping at her shrine. If ever there was undisguised admiration in a man's passionate gaze it was there plain to be seen on that man's face. It is for you, Gertrude MacDowell, and you know it.

Gerty could pay them back in their own coin and she just answered with scathing politeness when Edy asked her was she heartbroken about her best boy throwing her over. Gerty winced sharply. A brief cold blaze shone from her eyes that spoke volumes of scorn immeasurable. It hurt. O yes, it cut deep because Edy had her own quiet way of saying things like that she knew would wound like the confounded little cat she was. Gerty's lips parted swiftly to frame the word but she fought back the sob that rose to her throat, so slim, so flawless, so beautifully moulded it seemed one an artist might have dreamed of. She had loved him better than he knew.

Thus, as Joyce points out with gleeful bathos, does Gerty filter unknown reality—the seaside scene with Bloom—through the stereotypes of her mind, so much safer a process than a direct encounter with a man ogling a girl he doesn't know is lame. It is a horrible picture Joyce paints of Gerty MacDowell, the modern girl too stupefied to suspect her persecution, though perhaps the picture of Bloom, a “freer” more “elevated” person, is more horrible. Bloom is quite aware of being manipu-

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lated by cheap fiction and advertising, but, being aware, he becomes a manipulator—an advertising man and an aspiring writer of *Tit-Bits* stories. Such a cynical and pathetic gesture is the only affirmation allowed the average man, who is without the courage or madness necessary to attack the System.

II

Samuel Beckett takes Joyce's world view and removes all possibility for consoling illusions. From *Murphy* (1938) to *Watt* (1958) Beckett's hero has wandered conscious only of contentless patterns—of meaning found only in meaninglessness. In his reality particularity of any kind disintegrates; even the patterns, divested of time-space details, exist only to be jettisoned—themselves mere details of a higher, and in turn rejectable, pattern. Thus Beckett's hero moves from the sunshine world of time-space stereotypes toward and finally into a close night where, stare as he might, all is blackness, all forms are dissolved. If there is a perceivable reality, it is something thoroughly eclipsed by the very objects and forms which ordinary men believe constitute the world. Discovering this fact gives Beckett's perceiver his pained but awakened consciousness. Toward the beginning of the novel *Watt* tells of the day of his enlightenment:

I was sitting on the step, in the yard, looking at the light, on the wall. I was in the sun, and the wall was in the sun. I was the sun, need I add, and the wall, and the step, and the yard, and the time of year, and the time of day, to mention only these. To be sitting, at so pleasant a conjuncture of one's courses, in oneself, by oneself, that I think it will freely be admitted is a way no worse than another, and better than some, of whiling away an instant of leisure. Puffing away at the same time at my tobacco-pipe, which was as flat and broad that afternoon as an apothecary's slice. . . .

He goes on to explain that then "some tiny little thing" slipped and he found himself all of a sudden out of that time-place though still present in that pattern:

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It was the same sun and the same wall, or so little older that the difference may safely be disregarded, but so changed that I felt I had been transported, without my having remarked it, to some quite different yard, and to some quite different season, in an unfamiliar country. At the same time my tobacco-pipe, since I was not eating a banana, ceased so completely from the solace to which I was inured, that I took it out of my mouth to make sure it was not a thermometer, or an epileptic's dental wedge.

It was then Watt discovered that nothing is at it seems to be (as one has learned it to be). The discovery left him with a torturous question: Isn't consciousness itself a mere pretense that images, focused through oversimplifying *Gestalten*, correspond in some sense to whatever reality may (or may not) exist in the outward blur?

The humiliating unreliability of even so simple a perception as pipe-smoking on a step in the sun signifies for Watt the central horror of existence: the impossibility of knowing love and, since love is the keystone, of believing in man's entire structure of abstract ideals. Thus Watt continues with a comparison (itself the major discovery) for his change in the sun:

As when a man, having found at last what he sought, a woman, for example, or a friend, loses it, or realises what it is. And yet it is useless not to seek, not to want, for when you cease to seek you start to find, and when you cease to want, then life begins to ram her fish and chips down your gullet until you puke, and then the puke down your gullet until you puke the puke, and then the puked puke until you begin to like it. The glutton castaway, the drunkard in the desert, the lecher in prison, they are the happy ones. To hunger, thirst, lust, every day afresh and every day in vain, after the old prog, the old booze, the old whores, that's the nearest we'll ever get to felicity, the new porch and the very latest garden.

In this way Watt begins with a doubtful admiration for idealism—for the struggle to build viable illusions in the void—but also with the withering knowledge that such efforts are doomed. The thrusting affirmation is in reality static frustration.

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Explained early in the book, Watt's "change"—his discovery—took place long ago, and thus it does no more than provide a precedent condition for the plot ahead. Therefore, it might be said that Beckett really does not write novels at all, since a novel should be the thrust of a consciousness toward some affirmation or, at least, toward some discovery. Because his dominant theme is that no thrust is possible, Beckett writes a novel only in a negative sense—a novel announcing the fact that novels cannot be written.

The book begins with an old humpback, Mr. Hackett, who, attempting to sit in his accustomed place on a public bench to watch the sunset, finds "his seat" occupied by a man and woman who are making love indecently (in the lecherous manner which Watt later admires as "the nearest we'll ever get to felicity"). But a policeman to whom Mr. Hackett points out the indecency says that he sees no indecency, and as a result must listen to Mr. Hackett's vain efforts to prove that what he had seen really existed. Thus is established the initial theme: the old man's belief in what seems to be, as opposed to the modern discovery that nothing can be known. As darkness falls, the reader is removed from Hackett and Hackett's apparently knowable surroundings to go upon a train journey with the newly-arrived Watt, a shadowy figure about whom nothing is clear—not "nationality, family, birthplace, confession, occupation, means of existence, distinctive signs"—nothing but that he owes five shillings to one of Hackett's acquaintances. Finally leaving the train, Watt enters a house and waits in its kitchen, playing games with the lamplight, until a man, seeing him, departs from the house, luggage in hand. The pattern which the reader may impose upon this situation is that of a departing domestic servant being replaced by the new man, Watt. That at least is the pattern; Watt himself, never certain, becomes increasingly less sure why he is wherever he is, though he stays for what is probably two years. While there Watt holds only one interest—and this passively—*i.e.*, to see and know the master of the house, Mr. Knott. At the end of the first year, the

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upstairs servant leaves the house and Watt moves upstairs, replaced in turn by a new man downstairs. But now, as Mr. Knott's body servant, he finds he knows far less of his master than he thought he did. Now with the man's protean form and inarticulate sounds before him, Watt has no longer the "semantic succor" of pretending to know. Down in the kitchen, out of Mr. Knott's presence, Watt "had made a pillow of old words"; there he solaced and amused himself "trying names on things and on himself, almost as a woman hats." Here face to face with noumenal reality, Watt knows only that the *Ding-an-sich* can never be perceived and, therefore, it does not, and he himself does not, exist. Where Watt makes his deepest penetration into self-consciousness, the reader, presumably making his *own* similar penetration, is at the point of greatest separation from Watt. As communication becomes most difficult, Watt's ability to use words disintegrates—and he begins to invert them in every conceivable way. Moreover, there is intruded between the reader and Watt a first-person narrator, evidently Watt's replacement downstairs, who says that he doesn't understand Watt at all even though he wants to desperately. Only when Watt is replaced upstairs by the downstairs man, who is in turn replaced by a new arrival downstairs, can the re-integration of Watt with the reader take place. Thus begins the journey outward, from the deepest penetration of the noumenon, to the recognizable levels of self—*i.e.*, to the stereotypes of known existence. But one arrives at the end of Watt's journey (evidently Watt will now move on to a new job, repeating the process ad infinitum) with no sense of discovery other than the re-discovery that there is nothing to be discovered.

With Beckett the novel form ends in that *cul-de-sac* of nihilism perhaps first suggested by Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. There the message was the same as Beckett's, though Conrad kept the mystery, the suspense, and thus afforded a discovery. Watt on his inward way to Knott is essentially Conrad's Marlowe journeying from the known (suspected false) patterns of civ-

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ilization into the depths of a darkness illuminated only by his flicking faith in the existence of a sane and reclaimable Kurtz. Like Watt, Marlowe finds his vision of this ultimate absolute dissolved at the point of greatest penetration and, like Watt, journeys back to the perceivable levels of consciousness aware only that if a central reality exists it lies beyond the threshold of perception, beyond the point at which personality loses its coherence. The difference is that in the course of Conrad's novel Marlowe, and with him the reader, makes the discovery, whereas *Watt* begins with the discovery already made.

No one has examined the role stereotypes play in perception, no one has gone into epistemology, as profoundly as Beckett. Analyzing the relations between common stereotypes and all the *Gestalten* of perception, he has shown step by step how the cheap clichés forming the mass mind are connected with the increasingly complex—but nonetheless pretentious—simplifications through which an intellectual perceives *his* reality. He has shown finally that all absolute decisions as to the nature of a given sight or sound are, like words themselves, intolerably simple, and that to believe in the validity of denotation is absurd. Relentless in his logic, Beckett removes the possibility of representative form and thus of art; and though he admires in passing the madmen who can still make pathetic affirmations, he keeps his own protagonist unheroically hollow.

III

American novelists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have confronted the infringement of mass stereotypes more directly and with more passion than, with the exception of Joyce, have novelists of England and the continent. Living in the country which has led in degrading and, still more, in standardizing mass perception, they have reacted with an indignation and idealism generally absent from the sophisticated European analysts. Whereas Joyce's *Dedalus*, fleeing, becomes Beckett's slumped vagabond, American authors from Melville

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and Twain through Dreiser, Hemingway, and Faulkner have created heroes who struggle to hold viable illusions. The typical American protagonist becomes an insane or childish idealist.

From this general rule one might exempt James' Strether, a sane, though perilously sensitive, consciousness progressing from one level of stereotypes to another—each more complex than the one before, each closer to that noumenal reality which lies somewhere beyond the end of a permanent quest. Arriving in Europe, Strether finds that none of his portable "Woollett" prejudgments are adequate to the new situation; nor are his hard-earned categories of two months in Paris adequate to the situation of two months later. As Strether grows, so does his *Gestalt* of Paris enlarge, and gain in complexity. At first naive, he thinks himself insignificant—far inferior to this vast new world; but gradually he becomes sophisticated, and finally Paris exists only as a diminishing entity within his consciousness. Thus James portrays an artistic imagination rejecting generally accepted cultural stereotypes by creating its own forms of perception—and then, as those forms become outworn and stereotypic, acquiring new and more complex forms, ad infinitum. Essential to James' hero is the *elán vital* of consciousness which moves ahead, past the static forms, searching with unflagging optimism for new modes of belief. In this way *The Ambassadors* shows that consciousness does not move toward realization of outer goals, but moves only toward greater realization of itself. At the climax of his struggle to regain Chad, when it is obvious that he has failed in his "duty" and has been basely misled, Strether no longer cares about the prescribed values and behavior of his past. By this time he is looking on beyond the "struggle," now an absurdly hollow cartoon, and his "failure" falls out of focus. At the close of the novel, Strether is returning to America, prepared to see and to contain America's Pococks and its Mrs. Newsome, and again to move on.

Yet despite Strether's remarkable sanity, there is in his friend Waymarsh, as perceived by Strether, that "sacred rage"

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which marks the American novelist's chief reaction against stereotypic culture. Inherited from Melville's Ahab, this rage also becomes the driving force of Hemingway's men of violence and of Faulkner's idealists who go out with a bang rather than exist with society's whimpers. Writing in the *Kenyon Review* (Winter, 1947), Robert Penn Warren has shown how Hemingway reacts against the false stereotypes of the past—"abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow"—for which men have wasted their lives. Thus Hemingway's emphasis upon the world of the senses and upon anti-intellectualism marks his retreat from "the world," which, despite appearances, "Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light, / Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain." "Nada" becomes the only tolerable reality. But Hemingway, unlike Beckett, does not stop here. If his hero's violence is at first a furious rending of all the false clichés of the past, it also becomes a fervent assertion of his own idealist illusion. Warren writes: "The heroes make one gallant, though limited, effort to redeem the incoherence of the world: they attempt to impose some form upon the disorder of their lives, the technique of the bullfighter or sportsman, the discipline of the soldier, the fidelity of the lover, or even the code of the gangster." Faulkner's heroes, although far less successful, make the same attempt. Exchanging present reality for dream visions from the past, Hightower, Quentin Compson, and Boon find meaning only in the constructions of their own minds. Each hero perceives entirely in terms of his private symbols, and no objective reality is shared between separate minds. Because Faulkner presents differing consciousnesses viewing the same events, with no two arriving at the same interpretation, outward objective reality becomes increasingly complex and finally impossible. It can never be seen, for an individual consciousness is required to see it; and insofar as an individual consciousness sees it, to that degree is it limited—proportionately incomplete and falsified.

Faulkner's rage that "glory," "honor," "courage," "hallow"—the commonly shared absolutes of the past—are gone is also

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reflected in his style. His very "agonized rhetoric" forbids certitude in a given perception by evoking in the reader a sense that meaning is never thoroughly clear; the reader must never forget that if a common, objective reality exists it lies somewhere beyond the words, the forms of perception, by which man pretends to articulate it. Something like James in *The Ambassadors*, Faulkner seems intentionally mystifying in his effort to dissolve all of the simple, socially imposed reactions into complex individual responses. Much like Joyce, he takes his reader beneath man's static reliance on the words of expression, to examine the mysterious process of perception itself. Thus the reader, with the perceiving hero, must struggle to get meaning out of the raw material of consciousness; and a profound intimacy develops, as between comrades on a quest.

IV

The latest assault against the stereotypes is more vigorous than that of any English or continental novel since *Ulysses* or of any American novel since *The Sound and the Fury*. It is that of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*, a work flush in the traditions of American idealism and of English social analysis as well. As Joyce portrayed modern woman brainwashed and desensitized by the stereotypes, so does Nabokov portray the American woman of today. And for his hero he takes the imprisoned lecher who, as Beckett noted in passing, comes "the nearest we'll ever get to felicity" today. Nabokov, writing in the American tradition, does not dispose of today's idealist in a parenthesis, but instead makes his entire novel the statement written from the madhouse cell.

Consciously echoing Poe's ideal of a child-bride—from the marriage with Virginia Clemm and, more specifically, from "Annabel Lee"—Nabokov writes of a sex pervert, an incurable idealist, who destroys himself and those around him in a furious quest for a "nymphet," one of an imagined coterie of girl-children (aged nine to fourteen) who are mysteriously pos-

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sessed of "the fey grace, the elusive, shifty, soul-shattering, insidious charm that separates . . . [them] from such coevals . . . as are incomparably dependent on the spatial world of synchronous phenomena than on that intangible island of entranced time where Lolita plays with her likes." The tragedy of Humbert Humbert lies in his romanticism—his idealist insistence upon a being which, seen within these girls by no one else, exists only on an island in the sea of his imagination: "You have to be an artist and a madman, a creature of infinite melancholy, . . . in order to discern . . . the little deadly demon among the wholesome [stereotypic] children; *she* stands unrecognized by them and unconscious herself of her fantastic power." Humbert Humbert's fear throughout the story is that his creatures don't really exist: "What drives me insane is the twofold nature of this nymphet—of every nymphet, perhaps; this mixture in my Lolita of tender dreamy childishness and a kind of eerie vulgarity, stemming from the snubnosed cuteness of ads and magazine pictures."

So oppressed is Humbert by the picture of Spillane Woman forced upon his mind from without, the picture actually filled by his Lolita's (available) mother—"wellgroomed and shapely . . . [with] heavy hips, round knees, ripe bust . . . and all the rest of that sorry and dull thing: a handsome woman"—that he cannot keep his vision free, cannot forget that *this* is Lolita's "big sister," the form awaiting her after adolescence. While the real-life child, Lolita, is destroyed by his frequent and furious possession, while she actually grows into the stereotyped woman he abhors, his ideal Lolita flees him, banished by his attempted incarnation. The real-life Lolita actually flees with a mad and celebrated playwright, Clare Quilty, who, coming into prominence only with Humbert's first physical possession of the girl, personifies for Humbert the lower, goatish part of his own nature—that part which seems increasingly to exclude any other. Most devastating of all is the final comment of the rediscovered, but now grownup and married, Lolita that she would sooner go back to Quilty than accept the

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offered chance to return to Humbert; for thus Humbert realizes that after that first intercourse it was exclusively Quilty she desired. Insofar as her mind had been taken over by the stereotypes, the girl had always wanted the slick, ersatz (lecher that he was, Quilty turns out to be impotent) sex of Hollywood. One remembers now with full force an early description of the wall over Lolita's bed:

A full-page ad ripped out of a slick magazine was affixed to the wall above the bed, between a crooner's mug and the lashes of a movie actress. It represented a dark-haired young husband with a kind of drained look in his Irish eyes. He was modeling a robe by So-and-So and holding a bridgelike tray by So-and-So, with breakfast for two. . . . Lo had drawn a jocosely arrow to the haggard lover's face and had put, in block letters: H. H. And indeed, despite a difference of a few years, the resemblance was striking. Under this was another picture, also a colored ad. A distinguished playwright was solemnly smoking a Drome. He always smoked Dromes. The resemblance was slight. Under his was Lo's chaste bed, littered with "comics."

The lower picture which only slightly resembled Humbert was—though unknown to him—that of Quilty, already inseparable from the stereotypes dominating his heroine. On the bed under these pictures were the comics which—unknown to, or at least unadmitted by, Humbert—are the essential terrain of Lolita's mind. That his supposed nymphet was *all along* just another one of the "wholesome children" who, even before adolescence, think and feel only in terms of outwardly imposed stereotypes becomes for Humbert the central horror.

Nabokov's hero-artist does not, like Bloom, cringe from reality and cynically manage a world-view through the stereotypes, and does not, like Stephen, escape into a European ivory-tower. Mad and courageous, he makes a frontal assault. Indeed, both Nabokov and Humbert have come *from* Europe to America, where their very art develops from the crush of self between the advancing walls of stereotypes—and becomes the existential affirmation, the telltale heartbeat, from the prison: "‘Mr. Uterus (I quote from a girls' magazine) starts

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to build a thick soft wall on the chance a possible baby may have to be bedded down there.' The tiny madman in his padded cell." And Nabokov, unlike Joyce, makes no attempt to destroy easy levels of cognitive understanding, but in fact leaves them in, the better to lure readers into his existential prison. He permits only two responses: readers can reject *Lolita* as an impudent attempt to involve them in perversion, though such rejection puts them uncomfortably on the side of the imprisoning stereotypes, or they can uncomfortably accept Humbert's nympholepsy in order to join him in attacking mass culture.

Nabokov gives us a mad idealist struggling proudly against the nihilistic dissolution without. But Beckett gives us a seedy solipsist who, devoid of the pathos and dignity of Joyce's Bloom, communicates only collapse. Philosophically sound, epistemologically correct, Beckett's Watt lacks the human nature to build an illusion in the void—and thus refuses us the interest we seek in novels. Reading Nabokov, one finds it possible to hope that the modern novelist, remembering the nature of his enemy and of the means for attack, will return to that moral statement in social terms which—however illusory, however absurd—is his proper genre.

G. Armour Craig

D. H. Lawrence on Thinghood and Selfhood

Civilized society is insane. Money and so-called love are its two great manias; money a long way first. The individual asserts himself in his disconnected insanity in these two modes: money and love.

Lady Chatterley's Lover, ch. 9

NOW THAT it need no longer be passed from hand to hand in the dormitory or defiantly requested of the frowning keeper of the locked bookstack, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* will perhaps turn out to be a novel rather than a cause. And yet, for all the clinically detailed sexual experience described in many novels of the last thirty years (the original version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was privately published in 1928), it will never quite easily take its place among them on the open shelves. It is a strangely defiant performance. On the one hand, it was for Lawrence full of "tenderness": "To me it is beautiful and tender and frail as the naked self is," he once wrote. And on the other, it almost fulfills a wish he expressed for the paintings he was engaged in during his last years: "I wish I could paint a picture that would just *kill* every coward and ill-minded person that looked at it." To the ill-minded *Lady Chatterley* is certainly lethal, but to many serious readers of novels its tenderness is one of the triumphs of modern literature.

Lady Chatterley's Lover is in outline a thoroughly traditional, even conventional English novel. To the reader of Thackeray and Dickens, of Hardy and Bennett—not to men-

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tion the assiduous movie-goer—no situation is more familiar than that of the man and woman who are separated from each other by the rigid barrier of class but who cross the iron barricade on a ladder of love. And where are they then? Sometimes in a world of romance in which there is no option but to live happily ever after, a world of fantasy as glowing as the sunset into which Jane Eyre and Rochester walk off the last scene together. And sometimes they are in as hopeless a world as the fine and private grave in which Heathcliff offers Catherine the last embrace of *Wuthering Heights*. But either way, the world in which the lovers have sealed themselves off from the society they defy is one so private that it cannot be described in the language of the public, social world they have rejected.

Lady Chatterley's Lover boldly reverses this conventional relation. The world from which Connie and Mellors detach themselves of course resembles the industrial scene of many a novel dating back at least to Dickens' *Hard Times*. The "long squalid straggle of Tevershall" and its sullen inhabitants, the gloom of Wragby Hall, the penetration of village gossip, the fruitless banter of selfish sophisticates, even the endless barren round of housekeeping in the polluted air of the mining town—the reader of the traditional English novel will recognize many such features of the scene; he may even hear also as he reads them an echo of the famous line written ten years earlier: "The ceremony of innocence is drowned; The best lack all conviction."

But no revelation is at hand to overpower the inhabitants of this industrial wasteland of the twenties, and the world from which Lady Chatterley and her gamekeeper withdraw finally becomes as remote, as fantastic, as is the secret life of conventional fictional lovers. For Mellors the world outside his idyll is a "Thing"—an "insentient iron world" that "sparkled viciously in the electric lights." And this mechanized Thing-world, opposed to "the tenderness of life, the tenderness of women, and the natural riches of desire," turns men into money-making machines: "If you were young, you just set your

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teeth, and bit on and held on, till the money began to flow from the invisible." The "outside Thing," moreover (the observation is one of the startling moral prophecies of the novel), can be brought into the individual consciousness only by the enormous technological simplification of the radio. The portrait of Sir Clifford, sleek and pampered in his wheelchair, absorbed by his "listening in," is the last and most caustic stage of Lawrence's caricature of the Man of Industry. He did not live to see the Thing "come into your living room," as it is so elegantly put today, but he would not have been surprised, only angrier.

But here in his anger at the Thing, in his desire to "just *kill*" those whose minds are crippled by it, Lawrence has made the rival world, the tenderness of the lovers isolated in their hut amidst the woods, as complete and explicit as he knew how. The results are of course notorious, and it is one of the ironies of modern social history that public censors should be so outraged by the thoroughness of the idyll yet so oblivious to the attack on modern technology. And yet Lawrence himself invited the response. The scenes of passionate sexuality cannot but shock anyone accustomed to centuries of asterisks and the indefinite string of periods that ask us to do what we can when the lovers fall into each others' arms. . . . The shock was of course deliberate, for Lawrence passionately believed, as one of his friends said, "that there are no words which should not be spoken, no thoughts which could not be expressed," and that "when the hidden words and thoughts are brought into the clear daylight the poison departs." And yet he also believed, what he has Connie remark to herself as she winces before the lifeless intellectuality of Sir Clifford: "How she hated words, always coming between her and life: they did the ravishing, if anything did: ready-made words and phrases, sucking all the life-sap out of living things." The dilemma is a hard one for the novelist.

But whatever our response to the intimacies of the hut, there is an expository passage describing the last night of the lovers before they separate in which Lawrence becomes curiously ab-

Thinghood and Selfhood

stract, general, and even evasive. During the night of unfettered sensuality, we are told, Connie comes to feel that "she had come to the real bedrock of her nature," "to the very heart of the jungle of herself." The self is revealed in a mysterious conversion from shame to openness, from an unspoken reservation to an unspeakable freedom. Somehow in the night the distinction between Eros and Agape disappears. But it is all only "somehow": Lawrence does not tell us, because he cannot. Diana Trilling has remarked that Lawrence hung back here, that his own caveat against sensation-seeking as well as his puritanism compelled him to do his own expurgating. But his necessity was greater than that, for it was the necessity of the form of the novel itself. He might have been as explicit as was Faulkner in his account of Joe Christmas and Joanna Burden in *Light In August* without clarifying further the journey to the bedrock self. For the only meaning of "self" possible here, in a story, a novel about two lovers, is the self in relation to another—even in the most mysterious affinity with another. And this affinity, whatever its character, is the beginning of the great subject, the great concern with all novels, namely society. Lawrence has reversed the conventional expectation of the novel, he has articulated perhaps as thoroughly as anyone ever has or will the most private transactions of one person with another. But it remains true, whatever he may have hoped to achieve, that in literature there is no Self, only Selves.

Lawrence's difficulties are not lessened in the sequel to this strange passage. At the end of the novel Mellors and Connie are so isolated that only the crudest epistolary devices can relate them to the world which they have, however nobly, rejected. The degradation of their relation by the appearance of Mellors' crude wife, for example, is revealed in a letter of ghastly prurience from Sir Clifford to Connie. Again, the attempt—if that is what it is—to relate the passion of the lovers to a social world different from the Thing-world, through the incredible conversation between Connie's father and Mellors in London, seems a similar bankruptcy. The novel ends with a letter to

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Connie from Mellors: they must meet soon, he says, and concludes with an intimate salutation. The reader must supply this time not the sunset world of tenderness but a social world with which such tenderness can be continuous. A string of periods here would lead outwards.

Lady Chatterley's Lover is perhaps the last determined exploitation of the great nineteenth century myth of isolation. It is as poignant as Arnold's lovers enisled in the sea of life—

For surely once, they feel, we were
Parts of a single continent!

Perhaps only on such a continent might the two manias, love and money, become a single impulse of sanity. But the isolation cannot be overcome by the power of quadriliteral vocables or even by the most conscientious celebration of "the democracy of touch, the resurrection of the body!" In an essay published in 1929, on pornography and obscenity, Lawrence said, "The monstrous lie of money lurks under the cloak of purity. Kill the purity-lie, and the money-lie will be defenceless." It is perhaps as good a summing up of the aim of *Lady Chatterley* as he ever made. It suggests, also, the dissatisfaction with this novel that a number of readers, and not all of them ill-minded, have been unable to overcome. Here of course it is the "money-lie" not the "purity-lie" that is the "cloak," that surrounds like an outside Thing the world made by the lovers. And just as any cloak must differ from human flesh, so the "Mammon of mechanized greed" differs from that realm where Connie and Mellors discover their own sexual purity. The discovery—the achievement—of this purity, moreover, takes place in a conversion that no language, no matter how tender or how tough, can describe. But the cloak of the money-lie is neither killed nor rendered defenceless when the lovers have stripped themselves of all its conventions, of all the shreds and patches that keep them apart. It remained, as it has remained to this day, a vast circumambient system awaiting the bold design of the tailor who proposes a genuinely new style.

John Holmes

FREE WILL AND FIRE-TRUCK

A driver minding his own business,
I saw and heard, or heard and saw,
A car coming fast as a shock
Happening, lights hidden in daylight,
On and off and on, part of the noise.
Behind it the noise was a fire-truck
Rushing the air-slot the car split.
Then both were past, and I moving
Was a right hand brushed on left hand.
I would not like to be people
In a burning house five miles out
In a sea of green summer earth.
I would not like to be the driver
Gun-gunning the fire-truck. I would
Like being the first driver, racer
Into the future, ripper of time open,
Slammer into a wall rushing away
From me. To be nowhere till the fire.
Or I could be people earlier or later
On the same road, not burning at all.
Could they choose to be, for instance,
Me? I am on fire, the expected
An hour from now, arriving, possibly.

Leo Marx

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A continent ages quickly once we come. The natives live in harmony with it. But the foreigner destroys, cuts down the trees, drains the water, so that the water supply is altered and in a short time the soil, once the sod is turned under, is cropped out. . . . The earth gets tired of being exploited. A country wears out quickly unless man puts back in it all his residue and that of all his beasts. When he quits using beasts and uses machines, the earth defeats him quickly. The machine can't reproduce, nor does it fertilize the soil, and it eats what he cannot raise. A country was made to be as we found it. We are the intruders. . . . Our people went to America because that was the place to go then. It had been a good country, and we had made a bloody mess of it. . . .

Ernest Hemingway, *The Green Hills of Africa*

I

ON THE MORNING of July 27, 1844, Nathaniel Hawthorne sat down in the woods near Concord, Massachusetts, to await (as he put it) "such little events as may happen." His purpose, so far as we can tell, was purely literary. He had no reason to believe that anything memorable would happen and, except in a literary sense, nothing did. He sat there in solitude and silence and tried to record his every impression as precisely

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as possible. The whole enterprise is reminiscent of the painstaking literary exercises of his neighbor, Henry Thoreau. Before Hawthorne was done, in any case, he had filled eight pages of his notebook. What he wrote is of course not a finished piece of work, yet the surprising fact is that neither is it a haphazard series of jottings. If it has a kind of unity it is because one incident, an unexpected encounter with a machine, dominates the rest of his impressions. Around this "little event" a certain formal—one might almost say dramatic—pattern takes shape. It is to this pattern that I want to call attention. Looking at it closely—at the way ideas, emotions and other images group themselves about the image of the machine—we can observe the formation (on a microscopic scale to be sure) of a seminal theme in our literature.

To begin with, Hawthorne describes the setting, known in the neighborhood as "Sleepy Hollow":

... a shallow space scooped out among the woods, which surround it on all sides, it being pretty nearly circular, or oval, and two or three hundred yards—perhaps four or five hundred—in diameter. The present season, a thriving field of Indian corn, now in its most perfect growth, and tasselled out, occupies nearly half of the hollow; and it is like the lap of bounteous Nature, filled with bread stuff.

Then, in minute detail, he records what he sees and hears close by. "Observe the pathway," he writes, "it is strewn with little bits of dry twigs and decayed branches, and the sere and brown-oak leaves of last year that have been moistened by snow and rain, whirled about by harsh and gentle winds, since their departed verdure. . . ." And so on. What counts here, needless to say, is not the matter so much as the feeling behind it. From several pages in this vein we get an impression of a man in almost perfect repose, idly brooding upon the minutiae of nature, and now and then permitting his imagination a brief flight. Along the path, for example, he notices that "sunshine glimmers through shadow, and shadow effaces sunshine, imaging that pleasant mood where gaiety and pensiveness intermingle." For the most part, however, Hawthorne is satisfied to set down

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unadorned sense impressions, and especially sounds—sounds made by birds, squirrels, insects and moving leaves.

But then, after a time, the scope of his observations widens. Soon another kind of sound comes through. He hears the village clock strike, a cowbell tinkle, and mowers whetting their scythes.

He shifts from images of nature to images of man and society without any perceptible change of mood or tone. Indeed he makes a point of the fact that "these sounds of labor" do not "disturb the repose of the scene" or "break our sabbath, for like a sabbath seems this place, and the more so on account of the cornfield rustling at our feet." The passage is an elaborate evocation of a state of being in which there is no anxiety or tension or conflict. Hawthorne achieves the effect by describing the sequence of delicate sounds that interlace mind, nature and society. But in the end what imparts most force to the sense of all-encompassing harmony and unity is a vivid contrast:

But, hark! there is the whistle of the locomotive—the long shriek, harsh, above all other harshness, for the space of a mile cannot mollify it into harmony. It tells a story of busy men, citizens, from the hot street, who have come to spend a day in a country village, men of business; in short of all unquietness; and no wonder that it gives such a startling shriek, since it brings the noisy world into the midst of our slumbrous peace. As our thoughts repose again, after this interruption, we find ourselves gazing up at the leaves, and comparing their different aspect, the beautiful diversity of green. . . .

These casual notes, I repeat, make an excellent starting point for a study of the image of the machine and its remarkable career in American writing. But this is not to imply that there was anything remarkable about Hawthorne's response to mechanization. Quite the contrary. Two years earlier, for example, Ralph Waldo Emerson had made a similar, if more whimsical, entry in his journal:

I hear the whistle of the locomotive in the woods. Wherever that music comes it has its sequel. It is the voice of the civility of the Nineteenth

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Century saying, "Here I am." It is interrogative: it is prophetic: and this Cassandra is believed: "Whew! Whew! Whew! How is the real estate here in the swamp and wilderness? Ho for Boston! Whew! Whew! . . ."

So far from being original, in fact, Hawthorne's image of the machine was closer to being a literary commonplace. Nor was it particularly American, as anyone familiar with the literature of the age will recognize. For example, the same year as the "little event" at Sleepy Hollow, Wordsworth wrote a sonnet for a campaign of protest against a projected railroad through the lake country. It began: "Is then no nook of English ground secure/From rash assault?" And it ended with a plea to the "beautiful romance/Of nature" to "protest against the wrong." By setting the machine in opposition to the tranquillity and order located in the landscape, Hawthorne, like Wordsworth, makes it an emblem of the artificial, of the unfeeling utilitarian spirit, and of that fragmented, modern style of life that allegedly follows upon the assumptions of scientific rationalism. Both writers treat the new technology as another cause of what Wordsworth likes to call the "fever of the world."

But surely this is a familiar pattern. We all know that in England during the "industrial revolution" writers, along with most other sensitive men, were repelled by the ugliness, squalor and suffering associated with the machine power, and that their revulsion sharpened the taste, already strong, for images of rural felicity. For at least half a century before now, at least as far back as the work of William Blake, feelings of this kind had been hastening the massive shift in point of view we call the romantic movement. If Hawthorne's reaction is at all typical, and I submit that it is, then the image of the new technology held by American writers is of the very essence of the romantic; it expresses that total romantic "protest," to use Whitehead's wonderfully acute phrase, "in behalf of the organic." At first glance, then, the most striking thing about Hawthorne's image of the machine is its unmitigated conventionality.

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What makes this fact even more striking, of course, is our knowledge of American differences. We know that in America the new technological order *was* different. By the time of Hawthorne's visit to Sleepy Hollow many if not most Americans, like most visitors from abroad, recognized that in this country mechanization did not mean what it had meant in England.¹ At this time, moreover, when steamboats and factories and railroads were beginning to transform the native landscape, the idea of a unique affinity between America and the machine became popular. That idea, needless to say, is still very much with us. Even today, when the great scientific-technological revolution of our time is about to reach the most "backward" nations—when it so patently has become an international phenomenon—this notion of a special affinity between America and technology persists. We see it everywhere. It is reflected, for instance, in the universal habit of representing America with symbols drawn from the iconography of industrialism. The slogan at this moment in the Soviet Union is "Overtake America!" All the world, in short, acknowledges that America's experience of technology has been exceptional. Where else has there been anything to compare with the speed, intensity and, in a manner of speaking, success, with which young America embarked upon mechanization? To ask the question is to indicate why we might have expected to find a less conventional image of the machine in our literature. Why is it, under the circum-

¹ A new exploration of the early phase of American industrialism seems to be under way. Consider, for example, the unpublished study by Marvin M. Fisher, "From Wilderness to Workshop: The Response of Foreign Observers to American Industrialization, 1830-1860," University of Minnesota, 1958; Hugo A. Meier, "American Technology and the Nineteenth-Century World," *American Quarterly*, X (1958), 116-130; "Technology and Democracy, 1800-1860," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLIII (1957), 618-640; Charles L. Sanford, "The Intellectual Origins and New-Worldliness of American Industry," *Journal of Economic History*, XVIII (1958), 1-16; John E. Sawyer, "The Social Basis of the American System of Manufacturing," *Journal of Economic History*, XIV (1954), 361-379. All of this research would seem to support the theory that industrialism under American conditions was significantly different from the British and in general the European equivalent.

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stances, that our most perceptive writers seem merely to repeat a stock response of the European romantics?

The answer, let me say in advance, is that they only *seem* to do so, and that their reaction eventually does take on the color of native experience. But to say this is not to deny either the presence or the power of the convention at the outset. Right here we are at the point where "sociological" critics of literature often leave the track of plausibility. They forget that we have no business looking to art for direct, which is to say extra-conventional, ties with events—with history. They forget, in other words, that lines leading from social fact to literary artifact invariably pass through the realm of inherited form and convention. In this instance, to be specific, our writers first saw the new machine power largely as they had been prepared to see it by other writers. Hence their use of a literary and transparently derivative image of the menacing machine. But today, looking back over American writing during the past century, we can see that they invested the device with a singular intensity of thought and feeling. For reasons I mean to discuss, our writers have responded to the onset of industrialism with a heightened sensitivity to its implications. To get at their response, let us turn to a few of the classics of American literature which contain variants of the Sleepy Hollow motif.

II

A perfect illustration may be found in the chapter on "Sounds" in *Walden*.² Thoreau, incidentally, began his stay at the pond during the summer of 1845, just a year after Hawthorne's encounter with the train. Of course Thoreau, who is in a sense testing the transcendental mode of perception, makes a far more calculated effort than Hawthorne to endow sensory

² The self-contained character of the railroad episode in *Walden* is suggested by the fact that it is one of the passages Thoreau had published separately in *Sartain's Magazine* in July 1852. The passage was revised before the final version. See J. Lyndon Shanley, *The Making of Walden* (Chicago, 1957), 31.

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impressions with symbolic overtones. The previous chapter is about "Reading," or what Thoreau would call the language of metaphor. What now concerns him most is the way sounds, and particularly sounds of nature, typify the language, as he puts it, that "all things speak without metaphor." If described with sufficient precision the naked fact of sensation may also be made to unfold its meaning—or so he would like to think. Hence he begins with an account of magnificent summer days when, like Hawthorne at the Hollow, he does nothing but sit "rapt in a reverie, amidst the pines and sumachs, in undisturbed solitude and stillness." We get another celebration of idleness and of that sense of solidarity with the universe that presumably comes with close attention to the language of nature. But here, as he does throughout *Walden*, Thoreau reinforces this affirmation by juxtaposing another, a social reality. The tracks of the Fitchburg Railroad touch the pond not far from his hut, and so form the "link," as he says, by which he is "related to society." Once again, an auditory image conveys the essential quality of this relation:

The whistle of the locomotive penetrates my woods summer and winter, sounding like the scream of a hawk sailing over some farmer's yard, informing me that many restless city merchants are arriving within the circle of the town. . . .

This is not the place for a detailed analysis of the elaborate figurative passage that follows. To do it justice it would be necessary to describe the intricate contrast between the image of the pond and that of the railroad, and indeed the relations between these controlling figures and the thematic structure of *Walden* as a whole. Only by way of its central images can we arrive at a full appreciation of the book's meaning. But for the moment we need only note the over-all design of the passage, and its striking similarity to the Sleepy Hollow episode. Like Hawthorne, Thoreau uses the image of the machine to convey certain decisive tensions of the age—and at least one of its certainties. The certainty is change itself—the kind of change as-

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sociated with the railroad. For Thoreau, as for Melville's Ahab, the machine is the type and agent of an irreversible process—not alone technological change, but the implacable advance of history. "We have constructed a fate," he writes, "an *Atropos*, that never turns aside." In concluding the episode, he describes a cattle train going by, and that provides another vivid auditory image. As the train moves off into the distance, the air is filled with the bleating of calves and sheep. And so, Thoreau remarks in his driest tone, is our "pastoral life whirled past and away."

So far my examples may give the impression that this complex of images appealed only to writers somehow within the transcendental or Concord sphere of influence. But that is not true. Turning now to a later work that belongs to quite another strain in our literature—or so we have assumed—let us consider an episode in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Although Samuel Clemens did not publish his masterpiece until 1885, he set the action in the same critical period (1835-1845) we have been discussing. We recall that after Huck escapes from his father and organized society in general, he lives for a time on Jackson's Island. Here everything is "dead quiet" and life is easy. Nature supplies fruit and berries and fish. The island, needless to say, is another of those idyllic retreats so endlessly fascinating to the American imagination.

But the life that Huck and Jim lead on Jackson's Island should not be confused with the ideal style of primitivism. When Huck first comes upon Jim and learns that he has been living on "strawberries and such truck" Huck is incredulous. "Is that what you live on?" he asks, "... ain't you had nothing but that kind of rubbage to eat?" Huck has no illusions about noble savagery. In order to get away from discomfort or constraint or cruelty he repeatedly moves in the direction of—but by no means all the way to—the freedom of nature. He is untouched by piety about the superiority of the natural to the artificial. When he escapes from Pap's cabin he shrewdly "borrows" some meal and bacon and sugar to supple-

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ment the bounty of the countryside. In addition, he takes along a frying-pan, a coffee-pot, some tin cups, a knife, a gun, and some fishhooks. What I am saying is that Jackson's Island is the scene of a pastoral, not a primitive, retreat. The traditional landscape of pastoral occupies a middle-ground somewhere between raw nature and urban civilization. Even the raft is made of cut lumber, not logs.

After a rise in the river, Huck and Jim penetrate the innermost recesses of the island. Clemens describes what they do in a passage suggestive of our vernacular landscape tradition in painting, and especially of Edward Hicks and his celebrated work, "The Peaceable Kingdom":

Daytimes we paddled all over the island in the canoe. It was mighty cool and shady in the deep woods even if the sun was blazing outside. We went winding in and out amongst the trees; and sometimes the vines hung so thick we had to back away and go some other way. Well, on every old broken-down tree you could see the rabbits and snakes and such things; and when the island had been overflowed a day or two they got so tame, on account of being hungry, that you could paddle right up and put your hand on them if you wanted to; but not the snakes and turtles—they would slide off in the water.

The idyll ends abruptly when Huck discovers that the villagers are about to search the island. That is when he and Jim begin their down-stream journey by raft. But in fact the idyll is not over. The raft now becomes a mobile extension of the island, a floating platform of freedom. On the raft the fugitives continue to enjoy many of the delights they had known on the island, and above all the sense of the bounty, beauty and serenity of life in accommodation to the rhythms of nature. The river helps to insulate them from the hostile, slave society. It helps, that is, until a machine intrudes upon the scene:

... all of a sudden she bulged out, big and scary, with a long row of wide-open furnace doors shining like red-hot teeth, and her monstrous bows and guards hanging right over us. There was a yell at us, and a jingling of bells to stop the engines, a pow-wow of cussing, and whistling

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of steam—and as Jim went overboard on one side and I on the other, she came smashing straight through the raft.

Now here is another variation upon the Sleepy Hollow pattern. Clemens provides his hero with an Arcadian landscape, a profound sense of harmony with nature, and then he causes the sudden, menacing obtrusion of the machine. And these, as we shall see, are merely the more obvious and superficial parallels.

At this point, however, some objections surely will be raised. It will be said that Samuel Clemens held quite another view of industrial progress than the one implied here; that he admired steamboats; that he did not necessarily think of them as tokens of mechanization, and so on; that, in short, we have no right to attach any special significance to this passage. At first sight these arguments are compelling. It is of course true that we cannot take this episode as a considered statement about industrialization. No one can deny that Clemens often expressed approval of the changes associated with technological progress. In rebuttal perhaps we could show, as I do elsewhere,³ that he felt more than a little uncertainty upon this score by the time he wrote *Huckleberry Finn*. But for the moment, let us put that consideration aside and, to make the point as emphatic as possible, we will assume that except for the book itself all the evidence does indeed support the still popular notion of Clemens as an unwavering celebrant of industrial progress. Even if this were true we would, in my opinion, still be justified in taking this episode very seriously indeed. Here the lesson of criticism is clear. In the face of a discrepancy between what a writer tells us directly, in his own words so to speak, and what is implied by his work, it is to his work that we owe the more serious attention. As between mere opinion and the indirection of art, we assume that art springs from the more profound and inclusive experience.

But this is not to say that we may interpret the episode in

³ "The Pilot and the Passenger: Landscape Conventions and the Style of *Huckleberry Finn*," *American Literature*, XXVIII (1956), 129-146.

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Huckleberry Finn just as we would the one in *Walden*. To do so would be to ignore a vital difference between them. The image of the machine in *Walden* is manifestly symbolic; in *Huckleberry Finn* it is not. Clemens surely did not want us to extend the meaning of his words so far as Thoreau did. Indeed, it is more than likely that he did not *intend* any heightened or symbolic significance whatever. If we could ask him he would no doubt say that he was using a commonplace event of steamboat days merely to get Huck and Jim ashore. Yet on reflection it is impossible to drop the matter there. The symbolism may not be fully under control, and for all we know it may have got there inadvertently, but it is there nonetheless.

We cannot forget that in this book the raft is more than a raft; it is the location of freedom and love and pleasure. Huck tells us that much again and again. Furthermore, steamboats in *this book* (waiving the question of what they may have meant to Samuel Clemens) are associated with conspiracy, crime, violence and the spurious romanticizing of Sir Walter Scott. Steamboats intrude the culture of the shore into life on the river. In truth, all of the controlling themes of *Huckleberry Finn* are implicated in this brief passage. But then another question arises. If Clemens does not consciously impart significance to the image of the steamboat smashing the raft, how does it get there? Part of the answer lies in the fact that here Clemens, whether he knows it or not, is working with a pattern of image and idea by no means of his own invention. The Sleepy Hollow pattern has a conventional character, and like all literary conventions, it must be regarded as a creation of culture. By using the pattern, then, a writer inescapably brings to his work some of the thought and feeling that the culture has invested in it. And it is perfectly conceivable for him to be unaware of this transfer of meaning. How this happens becomes more apparent when we recognize the symbolic significance of these images outside of "high" culture, that is, in the quasi-popular expression of the age.

But to return to the image of the interrupted idyll. The

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ominous sound of the steamboat bearing down upon the raft, like the train breaking in upon the reverie of Hawthorne or Thoreau, is without question a refracted image of industrialization. It is a sound that first broke upon the American consciousness about 1840, and since then it has reverberated endlessly in our literature. More often than not the machine is made to appear with startling suddenness. Sometimes, as in the episodes we have considered, it abruptly enters the Happy Valley; in other cases an observer suddenly comes upon it. We recall, for example, that arresting moment when the narrator of Herman Melville's tale, "The Tartarus of Maids," is trying to find a paper mill in the mountains; he drives his sleigh into a deep hollow between hills that rise like steep "walls," and still he can't see the place when, as he says, "Suddenly a whirring, humming sound broke upon my ear. I looked, and there, like an arrested avalanche, lay the large whitewashed factory."

Again and again our writers have made some such encounter the occasion for a dramatic moment of revelation. We think, for example, of the opening chapter of *The Octopus*, where Frank Norris describes Presley's walk at sunset through the lush San Joaquin Valley. It is a lovely, mild evening. The poet is in a reverie. "All about, the feeling of absolute peace and quiet and security and untroubled happiness and content seemed descending from the stars like a benediction. . . . But suddenly there was an interruption." By now it is dark and the train, "its enormous eye, Cyclopean, red, throwing a glare far in advance," comes thundering down the track and smashes its way through a herd of sheep, flinging their bodies into the air, snapping their spines against fence posts, and knocking out their brains. When the "iron monster" has passed, Norris tells us, all sense of peace has been "stricken from the landscape"; Presley listens to the agonized cries of the wounded animals and the blood seeping down into the cinders, and thus the theme of the novel is set.

Years later John Steinbeck was to employ much the same device to set the Joads on their epic westward journey. In *The*

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Grapes of Wrath it is the arrival of the tractors that announces the separation of the Joads from their farm:

The tractors came over the roads and into the fields, great crawlers moving like insects, having the incredible strength of insects. They crawled over the ground, laying the track and rolling on it and picking it up. Diesel tractors, puttering while they stood idle; they thundered when they moved, and then settled down to a droning roar. Snub-nosed monsters, raising the dust and sticking their snouts into it, straight down the country, across the country, through fences, through door-yards, in and out of gullies in straight lines. They did not run on the ground, but on their own roadbeds. They ignored hills and gulches, water courses, fences, houses.

To prefigure his major theme Steinbeck contrasts two attitudes toward the land. First, he describes the state of mind of the man who drives one of the tractors. "The driver sat in his iron seat and he was proud of the straight lines he did not will, proud of the tractor he did not own or love, proud of the power he could not control." Here Steinbeck is working in a convention that includes, for example, *The Octopus*, Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*, Sherwood Anderson's *Poor White* and John Dos Passos's *U.S.A.* In all of these works the controlling idea of modern America is a metaphoric extension of the machine image. The machine is both physical object and token of a set of economic and social relations. That is obvious enough. What is less obvious, however, is that the machine has penetrated and conquered the mind. By this I mean that the attributes of the actual machine, especially its iron impersonality and irresistible power, represent what is most compelling to the man who operates it. And invariably his state of mind is compared, as in *The Grapes of Wrath*, to another:

And when that crop grew, and was harvested, no man had crumbled a hot clod in his fingers and let the earth sift past his fingertips. No man had touched the seed, or lusted for the growth. Men ate what they had not raised, had no connection with the bread. The land bore under iron, and under iron gradually died; for it was not loved or hated, it had no prayers or curses.

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This recurrent theme is often mistaken for simple nostalgia—a lament for a doomed agrarian society. Of course the agrarian ideal did embrace many of the values that Steinbeck and others regard as threatened by mechanization. Yet something much more fundamental is involved. To appreciate this fact one has only to notice how often American writers set the machine in opposition to a landscape that is neither idyllic nor bucolic. We think of the grave opening lines of T. S. Eliot's "The Dry Salvages," so reminiscent, as Lionel Trilling has observed, of the river passages in *Huckleberry Finn*. Thus Eliot invokes the "strong brown god" of the Mississippi as:

... almost forgotten

By the dwellers in cities—ever, however, implacable,
Keeping his seasons and rages, destroyer, reminder
Of what men choose to forget. Unhonoured, unpropitiated
By worshippers of the machine, but waiting, watching and waiting.

Again, at the end of "The Bear," William Faulkner uses much the same motif to extend the meaning of the final revelation. Only on his last trip into the woods does young Ike McCaslin grasp the true significance of his experience with the bear and the wild. Now he sees that all along his own destiny has been joined with that of the land itself. With the image of the train in mind he now recognizes what the machine had portended from the beginning, and that "running... between the twin walls of impenetrable and impervious woods" it had brought "with it into the doomed wilderness, even before the actual axe, the shadow and the portent of the new mill..." It is true that the machine stands for industrialization in this American fable. But for Faulkner, as for Eliot, what the machine threatens cannot be adequately represented by any benign, tidy, sunlit landscape of the agrarian celebration.

It would be simple but tedious to extend this canvass indefinitely. Anyone who knows American writing will think of countless other examples, passages from the work, let us say, of Sarah Orne Jewett, Walt Whitman, Willa Cather, Robert

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Frost, Hart Crane—as a matter of fact, it is more difficult to think of a major writer upon whom this pattern has failed to exercise its fascination. But my point is not simply that the pattern recurs endlessly in our literature; that is only one measure of its significance. What is more important, as Henry James tells us, is its inexhaustible power to evoke the distinctive qualities of American experience.

Early in *The American Scene* where James, after a long absence, records his renewed impressions of his native land, he dwells upon a scene in Farmington, Connecticut. James had traveled to New England almost immediately after landing in New York, and the region impresses him, for reasons that he admits may be shamelessly subjective, as a veritable "Arcadia." The autumn countryside gives James a sense of "some bedimmed summer of the distant prime flushing back into life." The landscape around Farmington, in particular, renews for him that older vision of "the social idyll, of the workable, the expensively workable, American form of country life; and, in especial, of a perfect consistency of surrender to the argument of a verdurous vista." Here, says James, is the American village at its best, where a "great elm-gallery happens to be garnished with old houses, and the old houses happen to show style and form and proportion. . . ." What finally is most striking, however, about the picture of the white village, with its high thin church steeple, so archaic in modern America as to seem almost a heraldic emblem, is another object in close juxtaposition, representing the present, the positive. It is the railway crossing. Out of the contrast James gains a new perception. While the church now seems a mere monument embellished upon some large white card, the railroad becomes for him the localization of "possible death and destruction," and the total impression is one of a "kind of monotony of acquiescence." But James' particular rendering of the scene, so reminiscent of a similar moment of acquiescence in Hawthorne's *Seven Gables*, is less important here than his conclusion. After some reflection upon Farmington, he concludes that this complex of images

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"contains . . . the germ of the most final of all . . . generalizations."

What he sees in Farmington, James is saying, is not one among many American scenes, but a thematic or, if you will, a symbolic tableau. It figures forth a controlling idea, the very marrow of his subject, which happens to be America. Mindful of the omnipresence of the Sleepy Hollow pattern in our literature, we are in a position to be even more emphatic than James. True, the scene he describes differs from Hawthorne's "original" in many important ways, and so do all the variations on the pattern that we have adduced. Yet perhaps by now the common denominator has become evident. In each case the significance of the pattern arises from the opposition between two cardinal images of value. One usually is an image of landscape, either wild or, if cultivated, rural; the other is an image of industrial technology. Sometimes, of course, the cardinal image is not actually present but is represented by lesser or associated images. In any event, the common and distinguishing feature of the motif is the sharp conflict of meaning and value evoked by the clash of images. The contrast between them arouses a sense of dislocation, conflict and anxiety. All established ideas are called into question. Of course I do not mean that the pattern is the key to every work in which it appears. Considered individually, as a matter of fact, many of its appearances may be of no great significance. But considered in their totality they constitute a supreme metaphor of contradiction in our culture.

III.

Of late much has been written, notably by Lionel Trilling, R. W. B. Lewis and Richard Chase, about the contradictions said to embody what is most distinctive in our culture.⁴ Mr. Chase, with brilliant results, has applied this dialectical con-

⁴ I am thinking of Trilling's essay, "Reality in America," in *The Liberal Imagination*; Lewis's *The American Adam . . .* (Chicago, 1955); and Chase's *The American Novel and Its Tradition* (New York, 1957).

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cept of culture to the tradition of the American novel. He shows that on the whole what distinguishes the American from the British strain in fiction is precisely what Hawthorne meant when he distinguished between a "romance" and a "novel." Like most ideas that characterize American culture, this distinction did not originate here. But Mr. Chase argues persuasively that it did have a special appeal to the native imagination—a state of mind formed, even more than that of England, by the contradictions rather than the unities and harmonies of culture. Hence the tendency in our fiction towards abstraction, away from the specification of social actualities, and away, above all, from the preoccupation with those subtle relations of property, class and status that form the substance of the great Victorian novel. Instead of writing the novel of social verisimilitude, our writers have fashioned their own kind of melodramatic, Manichean, all-questioning fable (or romance) in which they carry us, in a bold leap, beyond ordinary social experience and into the realm of abstract morality and metaphysics. Mr. Chase's theory works best for writers like Hawthorne and Melville, but it illuminates the broad tendency of our literature as well. No one, in my opinion, has come closer than Mr. Chase to defining that elusive quality of Americanness in our classic American literature.

But if we ask *why* these qualities are peculiar to our literature, Mr. Chase gives us only a cursory answer. The question, to be sure, does not really engage him. He is interested in literary consequences, not historic causes. Though he admits that the peculiar traits of American writing must be traceable to historic fact, he does not fully recognize the relevance to his thought of certain supreme facts of life in nineteenth century America. Above all, I am thinking of the unbelievably rapid mechanization of an under-developed society. Within the lifetime of a single generation a rustic and in large part wild or prehistoric landscape was transformed into the site for the world's most productive industrial machine. It would be difficult to imagine more profound contradictions of value or mean-

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ing than those made palpable by this fact. Henry Nash Smith has shown the remarkable extent to which images of landscape, and particularly the image of America as a new garden of the world, served to define the promise of our national existence. Yet just at the moment when society overcame the wilderness, the industrial technology called into question the assumptions underlying the idea of America as agrarian paradise. A contradictory view of man's relation to nature, though it had been present from the beginning of our history, now was made visible. It was represented by the machine. All of this was happening between 1830 and 1850, when our first significant literary generation was coming to maturity. Hence if we are concerned to know *why* our literature rests, as Mr. Chase says it does, "in contradictions and among extreme ranges of experience," then we had best look closely at the image of the machine, and its relation to the dominant themes in American writing.

To return again to the notes Hawthorne made in 1844, we can be sure that he was fully aware of the machine as a symbol of certain contradictory tendencies in his society. Only the year before he had published "The Celestial Railroad," a wonderfully compact satire upon the American faith in progress. In this sketch the new railroad is the vehicle for an illusory voyage of salvation. The American "Christian," unlike Bunyan's original, actually turns out to be on the road to hell. But there is no need to go beyond the Sleepy Hollow notes to demonstrate Hawthorne's awareness of the machine as a sign of an historic and social contradiction. He depicts the Hollow as a miniature of the American landscape, half wilderness, half corn-field—emblem of Nature's bounty. Here is an idealized pastoral world, and it encompasses not only wilderness and farm, but village and church as well. Auditory images carry a large burden of Hawthorne's meaning, as they do in Thoreau's and Clemens' versions of pastoral. The ties that bind society and nature are represented by a harmonious blend of sounds. We hear the mowers whetting their scythes, the church bells ringing, and the unending hum and stir of nature. There is no dis-

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cord. What we have, in short, is an auditory evocation of an organic community, a style of life very much like life in the hut at Walden or on Huckleberry Finn's raft.

But the onrush of the machine, also evoked by a sound, shatters the image of wholeness. The remorseless shriek of the locomotive banishes all harmony. As Frank Norris says in describing the bloody aftermath of the machine's passage, "The sense of peace . . . security . . . and . . . contentment was stricken from the landscape." In Hawthorne's notes, too, the machine is an agent of contradiction. It introduces the thought of citizens from the hot street, "men of business; in short of all unquietness. . . ." Throughout our literature the machine is to the ideal society what a hideous noise is to a delicate sonata. If the new technology does not literally smash into the symbol of utopian aspiration, as the steamboat smashes into Huck's raft, it invariably threatens it. Auditory imagery is particularly effective in suggesting the extension of a mechanized society's power into the realm of mind itself. Just as the harsh noise penetrates and fills the inner recesses of consciousness, so the external arrangements of life threaten, much more than before, to dominate the inner being. Noise here is an agent of alienation. In *Sleepy Hollow*, it cuts off the flow of sensation from the world of natural fecundity, thus separating man from a prime source of meaning and value. The community evoked by the machine is a drab, commercial city—a center of restless and, indeed, meaningless activity. It anticipates that dark vision of modern society that T. S. Eliot has made famous: a wasteland inhabited by "worshippers of the machine."

And yet, for all these unmistakable overtones of social or historic significance, it must not be thought that our writers necessarily use the image of the machine to direct attention to the historic fact of industrialization. To imply that would be to misconstrue their aims—to take the literary means for an end. As Emerson remarked, the artist "must" employ symbols in use in his day and nation, not in order to point in the direction of society, but rather to establish that interplay between art and

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experience that enables the great writer to "convey his enlarged sense to his fellow-men." In the case of Hawthorne at Sleepy Hollow, it is obvious that what chiefly interests him is not the contradiction between agrarian and industrial social orders. Here the contrast between the machine and the garden chiefly represents a conflict between two *psychic* states. Until he hears the train's whistle Hawthorne knows a serenity that approaches euphoria. The very lay of the land bespeaks a singular insulation from disturbance, and so enhances the feeling of perfect repose. It is in fact a cocoon of freedom from anxiety, guilt and conflict of all kinds—a veritable shrine of the pleasure principle. If this reading of a "Freudian" connotation seems to be pressing matters too far, consider how often our writers describe the machine as an invader of an enclosed space, a world set apart or somehow identified with an image of encircled felicity. In addition to the Hollow itself, we think of Clemens' island and the raft, Thoreau's hut beside a pond, Norris' valley, Faulkner's space between impenetrable walls of forest and, as we shall see in a moment, Melville's whale skeleton. In Sleepy Hollow the machine is menacing reality. Its noise is unsettling, piercing, implacable; it is a token of harsh, masculine aggressiveness, in sharp contrast to the feminine, submissive overtones of the pastoral image. When the noise fills the air the soothing sense of invulnerability is lost.

Right here we see, on a microscopic scale to be sure, how historic fact is attuned to literary theme. The appearance of the machine is associated, in Hawthorne's imagination, with that conflict between the natural and the artificial, between heart and head, love and power that we find everywhere in his work. And it arouses a mood of alienation and loss that pervades our literature. Hence the contrast between images of landscape and of technology evokes endlessly suggestive metaphors of contradiction. They have been used to express the opposition between ideas in every important field of value: social, psychological and even metaphysical. The relevance of the historic fact of sudden mechanization to the marked metaphysical quality of

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our literature is not far to seek. After all, a technological revolution, far more than any political change, calls into question man's underlying relation to nature and, indeed, the very nature of nature. It is not surprising, therefore, that the abstract significance of the pattern should be apparent in that most metaphysical of American novels—*Moby Dick*.

In Chapter 102 ("A Bower in the Arsacides"), after Melville has described virtually every feature of the whale, he comes to the question of its innermost structure. "It behoves me," he has Ishmael remark, "to get him before you in his ultimatum; that is to say, in his unconditional skeleton." Whereupon Ishmael tells of an adventure he had had many years before the fated voyage of the *Pequod*. Having been invited by Tranquo, king of Tranque (an imaginary land of Melville's invention), to spend a holiday in a seaside glen, he sees among the treasures of this primitive people a skeleton of a great sperm whale. It has been moved from the beach where it was found to a lush green glen, where the priests had converted it into a temple.

It was a wondrous sight. The wood was green as mosses of the Icy Glen; the trees stood high and haughty, feeling their living sap; the industrious earth beneath was a weaver's loom, with a gorgeous carpet on it, whereof the ground-vine tendrils formed the warp and woof, and the living flowers the figures.

Given the terms of Melville's fable, here inside the whale we are as close to the center of things as we are likely to get. The skeleton is a primitive temple of nature. The priests keep a holy flame burning within, and the "artificial smoke" pours out of the hole where the real watery jet once had come forth.

But as Ishmael moves further into the whale, the image shifts. The bones of the skeleton are criss-crossed with vines and through them the sunlight seems "a flying shuttle weaving the unwearied verdure." All at once the intricate structure of bones, the smoke pouring out, the light working through the lacing of leaves—all these combine to give him the impression

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that he is inside a textile factory. Melville uses the device for a characteristic metaphoric flight. Wherefore, asks Ishmael, "these ceaseless toilings? Speak, weaver!—stay thy hand!—but one single word with thee!" He pursues the analogy between human and natural productivity. What is the ceaseless striving for? Why is whale oil produced? What, in short, is the purpose of the *Pequod's* quest? Needless to say, the skeleton does not yield a direct answer, but it leaves him with a conviction of the irrational compulsion back of both "natural" and human productivity.

Nay—the shuttle flies—the figures float from forth the loom; the freshet-rushing carpet for ever slides away. The weaver-god, he weaves; and by that weaving is he deafened, that he hears no mortal voice; and by that humming, we, too, who look on the loom are deafened; and only when we escape it shall we hear the thousand voices that speak through it. For even so it is in all material factories.

Once again technology as noise comes between man and meaning, and so the episode contributes to Ishmael's growing skepticism. It is a bold conceit, this factory inside the whale—another vivid allegory of American experience: the hero deliberately making his way to the heart of primal nature only to find, when he arrives, a token of advancing industrial power. While the over-arching contradictions of *Moby Dick* are moral and metaphysical, not topical or historical, the fact remains that Melville's great theme of the ambiguity of nature—the whiteness of the whale—coincides with the paradox at the core of the Sleepy Hollow motif.

The essence of the matter, in metaphysical terms, is the conflict between polar conceptions of man's relations to nature. Much more is involved than the contrast between agrarian and industrial technologies, yet that contrast is a perfect metaphor of the more enduring difference. One technology is typified by the relatively direct extraction of value from nature as in farming, fishing, trapping and hunting. Here man accommodates himself to the uncontrolled rhythms of organic process. The

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machine technology, on the other hand, cuts man loose from such intimate relatedness to nature; it involves an assertion of his dominion over the merely organic. The difference, to be sure, is relative, and it shifts from one epoch to another. It is interesting, for example, that in earlier versions of literary pastoral the farmer often was cast in the anti-pastoral role as compared to the traditional hero, the shepherd. In modern times the farmer takes on an aura of pastoral piety, while the man at the machine is the antagonist. In any event, the contrast between the landscape and technology expresses a contradiction that has profoundly engaged the American imagination: the simultaneous pull of the opposed ideals of primitivism and progress, hence the need for reconciliation—that is, for the discovery of a symbolic terrain neither wild nor urban.

What I am saying is that the dialectical tendency of mind—the habit of seeing life as a collision of radically opposed forces and values—has been accentuated by certain special conditions of experience in America. Above all, it is connected with the sudden emergence of industrial power in a nation that had identified itself with a virgin landscape. No single work exhibits this connection so dramatically as *The Education of Henry Adams*. The theme of the book is the pulling apart, in Adams' experience as in the culture generally, of feeling and intellect, love and power. Adams adroitly builds the story up to 1900 and his discovery, as in a moment of religious exaltation, of the relation between his two master symbols—the Virgin and the Dynamo. But it is curious that in order to set his theme, right at the beginning of the book, Adams turns back to the year of Hawthorne's visit to Sleepy Hollow. In 1884, as he sees it in retrospect, the forces of history bore down upon him and fixed his fate. That was the year, he says, when

... the old universe was *thrown into the ash-heap* and a new one created. He and his eighteenth century, troglodytic Boston *were suddenly cut apart—separated forever*—in act if not in sentiment, by the opening of the Boston and Albany Railroad; the appearance of the first Cunard steamers in the bay; and the telegraphic messages which car-

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ried from Baltimore to Washington the news that Henry Clay and James K. Polk were nominated for the Presidency. This was in May, 1844; he was six years old; his new world was ready for use, and only fragments of the old met his eyes.⁵

A sense of the transformation of life by technology dominates *The Education* as it does no other book. This is partly because Adams comes at the theme with the combined techniques of the cool historian and the impassioned poet.

In the passage just quoted, for example, we can distinguish two voices. The voice of the historian tells us the news. He regards industrial power as an objective "cause" of change in American society. And he is able to draw a direct line of connection from these changes to his own life. It is technology (the new railroads, steamboats and telegraph) that has *separated* Adams from his family's eighteenth century tradition. Writing in this vein Adams virtually endorses a theory of technological determinism. "As I understand it," he wrote to his brother while at work on the book, "the whole social, political and economical problem is the resultant of the mechanical development of power." All through *The Education* we hear the voice of the historian directing our attention to technology as an impersonal and largely uncontrolled force acting upon human events. The historian provides us with statistics on accelerating coal and steel production; he makes us aware of the impact of the new power upon society quite apart from the way it strikes him. But the voice of the poet continually chimes in. He charges historical fact with emotion by using images such as (in the passage above) "thrown into the ash-heap," and submerged metaphors: "suddenly cut apart—separated forever." The poet invests the whole statement with traumatic overtones that give the sudden appearance of the machine the effect of an irrevocable fatality, like the cutting of an umbilical cord. The historian tells us what happened to America and to Adams, but the poet tells us how we should feel about what happened.

⁵ My emphasis.

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Moving back and forth between conceptual statements about the growth of power and sensory impressions of the same process, Adams raises his theme to a melodramatic pitch. The machine image serves to convey both an inward and an historical contradiction. Early in the book, for instance, he describes a journey he took in 1858 through the English Black District. It was, he writes, a "plunge into darkness lurid with flames." There, in the center of industrial England, Adams suddenly had a "sense of unknown horror in . . . [the] weird gloom which then existed nowhere else, and never had existed before, except in volcanic craters." Here he is working in the tradition of *Sleepy Hollow*; what he stresses above all else is his acute sense of the "violent contrast between this dense, smoky impenetrable darkness, and the soft green charm that one glided into as one emerged. . . ."⁶ The scene is England, but the sensibility is American. What strikes the American with particular force is the violent contrast between the industrial and the natural landscapes. If we turn to Carlyle or Ruskin or Morris we may find similar passages, but in general the English writer is more likely to regard the new power as a threat to some cherished ideal of high civilization or art or craftsmanship.

Adams' evocation of horror in the presence of the machine reaches its climax in the account of the Paris Exposition of 1900 where, in a celebrated passage, "he found himself lying in the Gallery of Machines . . . his historical neck broken by the sudden irruption of forces totally new." Confronting the new dynamos he felt an impulse to pray, much as Christians prayed to the cross—or to the Virgin. And here all the polarities of the book, not least among them the sharp contrast between the weird smoky gloom and the soft green charm of the landscape, culminate in his celebrated symbolic tableau: the conflict between "two kingdoms of force which had nothing in common but attraction": one represented by the Dynamo, the other by the Virgin. If the tendency towards an abstract or dialectical view

⁶ My emphasis.

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of life is a distinctive characteristic of American culture, then *The Education of Henry Adams* is one of the most American of books. Indeed, Adams uses the opposition between the Virgin and the Dynamo to figure forth an all-embracing conflict: a clash between past and present, unity and diversity, love and power. In his Manichean fashion he marshals all conceivable values. On one side he lines up heaven, beauty, religion and reproduction; on the other: hell, utility, science and production.

The Education of Henry Adams embodies a view of life that had been implicit in the Sleepy Hollow convention from the beginning. Of course there is a world of difference between the complex and highly wrought pattern contrived by Adams and the off-hand, Wordsworthian impression of the machine that Hawthorne had set down in 1844. What had begun as a casual notation now appears as an elaborate, tragic and all-inclusive thematic figure. And yet it is impossible to miss the continuity, or at least the similarity, between the two. Every version of the Sleepy Hollow motif depicts some aspect of the clash between the two sovereign kingdoms of force. I do not mean that the device is everywhere as important as it is in *The Education*, or that all writers who use it have in mind precisely the same antinomies. But the over-all pattern, and particularly the emotional pattern, is in essence the same wherever we find this root metaphor of contradiction.

If Adams exaggerates, he does not significantly change the underlying feeling. The encounter with the machine had always been something of a shock. Now, in *The Education of Henry Adams*, we find that it not only fills the writer with awe and terror; it arouses nightmarish visions of race suicide. The book may be read as the connecting link between the age of Hawthorne and the age of Eliot. To Adams the Dynamo is the force in the twentieth century most nearly equivalent, in its command over human behavior, to the sublimated sexual vitality that built Chartres. But in all other respects the two forces are in violent opposition. One exalts, the other denies, the beauty of eros. In earlier versions of the Sleepy Hollow pattern we may

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find insinuations of the idea that technology threatens sexual fulfillment. (Even Hawthorne, in his insistence upon the Hollow as an emblem of natural fecundity, had implied as much.) But Adams, in using the figure of the Virgin, makes this meaning absolutely plain. "In any previous age," he remarks, "sex was strength." Now the Dynamo foreshadows an industrial society that will deny, as no other society ever had done, the creative power of eros. On one of his scales the historian places the drab, utilitarian culture of industrial America; on the other, he places Chartres and the Louvre. The choice for Adams, needless to say, is clear. All of this no doubt is obvious, but I would stress the fact that it is precisely his awareness of mechanization and its consequences that leads Adams to reaffirm the symbol of the Virgin. She represents "the highest energy ever known to man, the creator of four-fifths of his noblest art, exercising vastly more attraction over the human mind than all the steam-engines and dynamos ever dreamed of. . . ."

What Hawthorne heard in the Concord woods, to use the idiom of Henry Adams, was a new outbreak of the ancient warfare between the kingdom of love and the kingdom of power. It is the same war that Mark Twain dramatizes when he describes the steamboat interrupting the idyll on the raft. It is a dominant, probably *the* dominant theme in our literature. To think of so universal a theme as "romantic" is misleading, especially if by that we mean to identify it with a particular movement in modern European literature. How much more elemental and, curiously enough, more traditional, it really is may be seen in an early statement of the theme of *The Education of Henry Adams*:

Winter and summer, then, were two hostile lives, and bred two separate natures. Winter was always the effort to live; summer was tropical license. Whether the children rolled in the grass, or waded in the brook, or swam in the salt ocean, or sailed in the bay, or fished for smelts in the creeks, or netted minnows in the salt-marshes, or took to the pine-woods and the granite quarries, or chased muskrats and hunted snapping-turtles in the swamps, or mushrooms or nuts on the autumn hills, summer and

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country were always sensual living, while winter was always compulsory learning.

Again there is a danger, as in the case of *Huckleberry Finn*, of confusing the dominant feeling back of the *Sleepy Hollow* tradition with primitivism—the impulse to reject civilization in 1910. Certainly it is true that Adams, in the figure of the Virgin, means to celebrate an idea of freedom rooted in the memory of summer pleasures: the sensual living, the immersion in the sensations of nature, and above all, the sense of oneness with the external universe. The force of *The Education*, and of American literature generally, comes out on the side of hostility toward a society under the growing dominion of science, technology, industry, in short, the Dynamo. And yet the point is not that the Dynamo is intrinsically evil, but rather that it arrives in this country as a threat to an ideal of balance, or rhythmic harmony of existence, that Adams recalls of his childhood and that had long been associated, in the native imagination, with the virgin landscape itself. The feeling of American writers toward the machine can only be understood in relation to their feelings about the setting in which it appears. That is why the imagery of technology so often is yoked to imagery of landscape. The *Sleepy Hollow* pattern is the germ-cell, so to speak, of the ruling theme in our literature. The ideal vision of life that it reveals has less in common with primitivism than with the ancient tradition of pastoral.

IV

The idea of pastoral is by its very nature difficult and elusive. But the difficulty is compounded when we use the term as we do, in two quite distinct ways. Some scholars and critics use it as a name for a specific mode, or in any case a particular set of literary conventions.⁷ By pastoral they mean poems that take the form of a dialogue or singing match between shepherds, or of

⁷ A notable example is Walter W. Greg, *Pastoral Poetry & Pastoral Drama* (London, 1906).

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a dirge or elegy sung by a rustic as in the work of Theocritus. This strictly formal meaning of the term, obviously enough, has little or no bearing upon American writing. No significant pastorals, in that strict sense, have been written by Americans, and as a matter of fact the pastoral mode in the English language seems to be just about dead. But pastoral is also used to refer to the motive that lies behind the form, and to the images and themes and even the conception of life associated with it. It is this second, wider sense of the term that is relevant here. To indicate just how relevant it is I want briefly to turn back to Virgil's *Eclogues*, a fountainhead of the pastoral strain in western thought and expression. Although Theocritus preceded him, it was Virgil who first created the symbolic landscape, a blend of myth and reality, that is particularly relevant to the American imagination. As Bruno Snell remarks, Virgil "discovered" Arcadia.⁸ Here are the opening lines of the first eclogue as translated recently by E. V. Rieu.⁹ A shepherd, Meliboeus, is speaking to another shepherd:

Tityrus, while you lie there at ease under the awning of a spreading beech and practice country songs on a light shepherd's pipe, I have to bid good-bye to the home fields and the ploughlands that I love. Exile for me, Tityrus—and you lie sprawling in the shade, teaching the woods to echo back the charms of Amaryllis.

Tityrus answers with praise of a patron who lives in Rome, and to whom he owes his liberty and his "happy leisure." He calls the man a god, and promises to honor him with sacrifices. "He gave the word," Tityrus says, "and my cattle browse at large, while I myself can play the tunes I fancy on my rustic flute." And then Meliboeus speaks again:

Don't think that I am jealous. My only feeling is amazement—with every farm in the whole countryside in such a state of chaos. Look at

⁸ Bruno Snell, "Arcadia: The Discovery of A Spiritual Landscape," in *The Discovery of the Mind, The Greek Origins of European Thought*, tr. T. G. Rosenmeyer (Oxford, 1953).

⁹ Virgil, *The Pastoral Poems* (Penguin Classics, 1956).

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myself, unfit for the road, yet forced to drive my goats on this unending trek. See, Tityrus, I can hardly drag this one along. Just now, in the hazel thicket here, she bore two kids—I had been counting on them—and had to leave the poor things on the naked flints. Ah, if I had not been so blind, I might have known that we are in for this disaster. Often enough I had been warned by Heaven, when lightning struck the oats.

Now what is most striking, when we read these lines with the Sleepy Hollow motif in mind, is the similarity of the root conflict, and of the over-all pattern of images and ideas.

At the outset we are introduced to an idealized landscape. Tityrus, lying at ease in the shade of the beech, enjoys all the satisfactions of the pastoral utopia: peace, plenty, leisure—his condition is joy itself—and it all arises from his harmonious relation to the natural environment. The harmony may be described in any of several vocabularies, ranging from those associated with the more material to the more abstract forms of experience. It is, for example, economic. Nature apparently supplies all of the contented shepherd's needs, and what is more, nature does virtually all of the work. A similar interchange between man and nature accounts for the fulfillment of his less tangible needs. For instance the poet, by using an auditory image, makes palpable the power of the landscape to inspire an esthetic delight: the woods "echo back" the notes of the pipe. The esthetic pleasure, moreover, is not easily distinguished from what can only be called a religious or metaphysical relation. Nature here is not merely a passive object of perception; it is responsive to man. By insisting that the woods "echo back" the countryman's music—a recurrent device in pastoral—Virgil evokes that sense of relatedness between man and not-man that is akin, in feeling if not in concept, to prayer or revelation. In classical Greek thought this feeling *was* in fact regarded as religious. In Virgil the point of the transcendent experience is that the consciousness of the shepherd shares a principle of order with the non-conscious. We delight in echoes because the sounds we make are answered, as it were, by the inanimate universe. From the beginning, in other words, pas-

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toral contains the promise of the spiritual serenity that religion also would provide.

What makes the promise all the more precious, of course, is the contrast between the joy of one shepherd and the plight of the other. No sooner does Virgil sketch in the Arcadian landscape than he reveals quite another kind of world pressing in from without. It is the menacing world of the great city, of organized power, of all collective discipline and constraint. It is, in a word, Rome. Like many of Virgil's countrymen at the time the eclogues were written, Meliboeus has been evicted. (The evictions actually were effected in order to provide land for veterans of the imperial army.) We are made to feel that the immediate setting, a place of tender feeling and contentment, is an oasis in a land of tragic disorder. Every farm in the countryside, according to the dispossessed shepherd, is in a state of chaos. The encroaching power threatens the very principle of natural fertility (Meliboeus has been forced to abandon the newborn kids). What we feel about his situation is at every point the opposite of what we feel about Tityrus'. Having been divested of his land, Meliboeus faces a prospect of unending anxiety, deprivation and work. Nowadays we should call his state of mind one of alienation. While Tityrus continues to sing the praises of his patron, Meliboeus describes his own fate:

... the rest of us are off; some to foregather with the Africans and share their thirst; others to Scythia, and out to where the Oxus rolls the chalk along; others to join the Britons cut off as they are by the whole width of the world. Ah, will the day come, after many years, when I shall see a place that I can call home ...?

What chiefly concerns him is his enforced separation (being "cut off") from the landscape of his desire, a lovely "green hollow":

Forward, my goats; forward, the flock that used to be my pride. Never again, stretched out in some green hollow, shall I spy you far away, dangling on the rocky hillside where the brambles grow. There will be no songs from me, my goats, and I shall lead you no more to crop the flowering clover and the bitter willow shoots.

Two Kingdoms of Force

The contrast between the situation of the shepherds, and between the two kingdoms of force, Arcady and Rome, could not be more complete. For that reason the pastoral conception of life has been mistaken for an outright repudiation of organized society. But the theme of pastoral is not the same as the simplistic, black and white theme of romantic primitivism. Even in the few lines quoted from Virgil we get some notion of the complexity of insight that is generated by the initial conflict. It is important to notice, for example, which of the shepherds the poet endows with the more profound sense of lyrical identification with nature.

Happy old man! You will stay here, between the rivers that you know so well, by springs that have their Nymphs, and find some cool spot underneath the trees. Time and again, as it has always done, the hedge there, leading from your neighbour's land, will have its willow-blossom rifled by Hyblaeen bees and coax you with a gentle humming through the gates of sleep. On the other side, at the foot of the high rock, you will have the vine-dresser singing to the breezes, while all the time your dear full-throated pigeons will be heard, and the turtle-dove high in the elm will never bring her cooing to an end.

The dispossessed shepherd speaks these lines. There can be no doubt that the intensity of his praise for the bucolic style of life stems from what he suffers of civilization. The pastoral impulse, in other words, is formed under pressure from hostile forces. Virgil underscores this point by having the fortunate shepherd, who is in a position to enjoy the felicity of life in Arcadia, pay his respects to Rome. Instead of lapsing into mindless country pleasures, he insists upon his debt to a patron at the center of power. Without such support, he says, he would have neither freedom nor leisure to enjoy. The irony is one that writers with a strong bent toward primitivism are likely to miss. In Virgil's poem the joys of Arcady exist only by virtue of the power of Rome.

The pastoral impulse, then, is an impulse toward reconcilia-

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tion.¹⁰ In the face of civilization's encroaching power, the pastoral poet reaffirms the need for a balance of human experience. Nothing makes the mediating character of the impulse so clear as the spatial symbolism in which it is expressed. The poet invests his affirmation in the image of a lovely green hollow. To arrive at this haven it is necessary to move away from Rome in the direction of nature, away from the repressions of the city toward the license of the wilderness. But the movement stops far short of unimproved, raw nature. "Happy old man!" the unfortunate shepherd says to his friend in the first eclogue. "So your land will still be yours. And it's enough for you, even though the bare rock and the marshland with its mud and reeds encroach on all your pastures. Your pregnant ewes will never be upset by unaccustomed fodder; no harm will come to them. . . ." In Virgil's poem the ideal pasture has two vulnerable frontiers. One faces toward Rome, the other toward intractable nature. The ruling impulse here is to discover that middle ground where the opposing forces of love and power, nature and civilization, may be reconciled.

With Virgil's poem in view it is easier to see the special relevance of the pastoral motive to the interpretation of American experience. From the beginning the conditions of life in the new world invested the ancient theme with a singular intensity of meaning—with fresh and vivid symbols. Here, after all, is a society that came into being when advanced parties of western civilization invaded a prehistoric landscape. They moved from east to west, away from Rome toward the wilderness. The movement may be understood as an effort to create what one

¹⁰ My own thinking about the nature of pastoral has been stimulated by William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (London, 1950); Erwin Panofsky, "Et in Arcadia Ego," first printed in Raymond Klibansky and H. J. Paton, eds., *Philosophy & History* (Oxford, 1936), 223-254, and later revised in Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (New York, 1957), 295-320; Renato Poggioli, "The Oaten Flute," *Harvard Library Bulletin*, XI (Spring, 1957), 147-184; and Hallett Smith, "Pastoral Poetry," in *Elizabethan Poetry, A Study in Conventions, Meaning and Expression* (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), 1-63.

Two Kingdoms of Force

classical scholar, describing Virgil's Arcadia, calls a "half-way land" where the "currents of myth and empirical reality flow into one another."¹¹ In place of Sicily, the setting Theocritus had used, Virgil set his shepherds down in Arcadia, a land that was real yet remote enough to be endowed with the legendary glow of the golden age. And that, as everyone knows, is how the new world first struck the imagination of Europe.

But I do not mean to suggest that the pastoral image of America was meaningful only in the initial phase of our history. The dramatic "invasion" of the unspoiled country did not occur only once, when colonists first set foot on the eastern shore. It was reenacted again and again from the time of Jamestown, in 1607, until the nineteenth century when, with the onset of industrialism and the closing of the frontier, the drama of the new beginning reached something like a climax. At that time the image of the machine took hold of the native imagination. These historical circumstances help to account for the striking resemblance between the Sleepy Hollow pattern and the thematic design of Virgil's poem, first published in 39 B.C.

But of course there are vital differences between American and traditional versions of pastoral. In the typical American fable, such as *Walden* or *Huckleberry Finn* or "The Bear," the recoil from civilization is much more powerful than in Virgil's poem. Back of this radical thrust toward nature we can discern the combined force of nineteenth century ideas and of the unique American situation. It carries the hero to the very edge of anarchic primitivism. Can he make his way back to a landscape of reconciliation? What direction does he take? For that matter, can there be such a landscape in the presence of the Dynamo? It is not surprising that our writers have no answers to these questions, or that a strong tragic undertone may be felt in American pastoral. For the contrast between the two cardinal images of value, the machine and the native landscape, dramatizes the great issue of our culture. It is the germ, as Henry James put it, of the most final of all questions about America.

¹¹ Snell, 283.

Four Drawings, and an Essay on Kollwitz

by *Leonard Baskin*

She is the voice of the silence of the Sacrificed.

ROMAIN ROLLAND

Who is to say when a weeping face becomes a trenchant line?

BEN SHAHN

Indeed, only the elemental emotions of the human race are great and eternal. The things that arrest my attention are what a human being has suffered and is able to endure, his greatness, his concerns (including myth and dream of the future).

ERNST BARLACH

All art is propaganda. ERIC GILL

"He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision—he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath: 'The horror! The horror!'"

JOSEPH CONRAD in *The Heart of Darkness*

THE VISION OF "Mistah Kurtz," whose death epigraphed the lives of a generation, was the vision of Käthe Kollwitz. Kurtz at the center of burning blackness pursued his horror and was overwhelmed by it; Kollwitz at the heart of Berlin stood still and the living emblems of horror, the diseased and the despaired, thrust themselves at her, enveloped her vision and ennobled her. Kurtz died in the cabin of a fetid river steamer, his horror unspoke. From the anguish of Kollwitz flowed lithographs, etchings and woodcuts, and in this agony we share.



Bartleby

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. S. Simon, Boston.



Marat

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. S. Stone, Boston.

Kite



Kite & Dog

Collection of Robert Gwathmey.



Angel of Death

Collection of Esther Baskin.

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An Essay on Kollwitz

Kollwitz did not paint. The blandishment of colors, the inevitable sensuousness of fat oil or sparkling water paints were alien to her needs. She dwelt in a world of blacks and white, and her prints glow with the arcana of these absolutes, the penumbral, somber and silver greys. She strove for a complete technical mastery of the various print media. Her diaries chronicle this struggle, the many starts, the continued questioning and questing, the necessity that drove to triumphal control and to final full artistic freedom. This growth of technical mastery and artistic maturation can be brightly perceived in her lifelong series of self portraits. In the first etched self portrait dated 1891, when she was twenty-four, we already see the familiar features, but young, vigorous, intent, not yet tragic, but surely unsmilingly prepared for the marks and scrawls that age and deepening sorrow were to cut into this face. Kollwitz never smiles or even gently hints at a furtive smile in any of her self portraits, unlike Rembrandt or Munch, who recorded their faces in every mood. Slowly with gathering strength the self portraits grow graphically freer and broader, more somber, more taut, the features more traced and lined until the last great black lithographed self portrait, in which she turns away from us a monolithic woman, grown monumental, formed of the earth. Here she is eternal, the awful embodiment of maternal loss and suffering, the warm white glow of motherhood wrecked into bleak melanism.

Kollwitz becomes more and more a mother-image in reverse. "Mother and child" becomes in our living landscape of death "Mother and Dead Son," "Death and the Mother," "Death Calls a Woman," etc., etc., until the familiar icon is replaced with childless mothers and motherless children. Käthe Kollwitz's younger son Peter was killed in October, 1914, an early sacrifice in the First World Madness; she never quite healed from this wound. The emotional truth that empowers the woodcut series called *Krieg-War* (1922-23) springs, to paraphrase Heine, from the blood of a mother. The theme of this series is the ancient keen of innocent suffering: the mother offer-

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ing her child to the powers that monger war; the widow in bereavement and in hungered Death; the bitter bewildered people (the old, the women, and the childlike) regarding the havoc of war. How very different the means of her first series of prints—*Ein Weberaufstand* ("The Weavers," 1893-97)—and yet how many of the themes that were to obsess her are there indicated.

Compared with the wracked Germany of the past forty years, the Germany of Kollwitz's youth must seem an era of health, vigor and happiness. The country was pervaded with a kind of Prussian chamber-of-commerce atmosphere and one thinks of "Manifest Destiny," Bismarck and Kaiser Wilhelm II (who vetoed the award of a gold medal to her for the "Weavers" cycle in 1898). Yet in 1898 she writes in her diary:

My work has doubtlessly followed a social trend at an early stage, influenced by my father's and my brother's convictions as well as by the entire literature of the period. The true reason, however, why I began to depict only the workers' lives lies in the fact that the subjects drawn from this sphere simply and unreservedly gave me all that I considered beautiful. A load carrier in Königsberg was beautiful to me and so were the Polish peasants and all the simple and dignified movements of the working people. There was not the slightest attraction for me in people of the middle class. The bourgeois way of life seemed to me pedantic and small. In the proletarians I found greatness and scope. Only much later, when I came to know—mainly through my husband's work—all the hardship and tragedy in the depths of proletarian living, when I met the women who came to my husband, and also to me, for help and advice, did I fully realize the fate of the proletariat and all it entails. The unsolved problems of prostitution, of unemployment and others did not cease to torment and trouble me and bound me to the representation of the lower classes.

Kollwitz's entire oeuvre, excepting the self portraits, is thematically bound to the proletariat. The universality of her content lifts it beyond the immediately tendentious or the specific: the sob is as trenchant today as it will be fifty years hence. The etchings of the "Weavers" cycle reflect the work of Max Klinger, whose

An Essay on Kollwitz

series *Ein Leben* ("A Life") she had seen in 1884. Kollwitz was stirred by Gerhardt Hauptmann's play *The Weavers*. The theme was prophetic for Kollwitz's work, just as Kollwitz's work is prophetic for our time: the maimed, the appalled and destroyed, the lost and the "beat," all survive in us as within her plate-marks. The weavers, deprived beyond contenance, rise up, are stalwart and brave, are indeed human, are repulsed, beaten into bestial submissiveness and hopelessly sit by their dead. One of the etchings, rich in tonal grandeur, reveals a stricken mother sitting dumb in woe at the bedside of her shrunken dying infant son. Only the compassionate darks umbrage this vision of the despoiled. Hauptmann wrote of Kollwitz, "Her flowing line strikes home like a cry from the heart. Such a cry of pain was never heard in ancient times." The *Bauernkrieg* ("Peasant War") of 1902-08 reaches deeper into history to discover the same theme of rebellion and suppression. The etchings of this series, compounded with soft-ground and enriched with aquatint, are much larger, more sure and broad than in "The Weavers." The print called *Schlachtfeld* ("Battlefield") shows a mother searching the nighttime battlefield for her dead son. From her bulk of sagging weariness, the mother stretches forth the mother-hand to turn face after face into her lamp. The field lies still and wet, nothing moves or is seen but the great swollen hand, the new-dead face and the lamplight. This is an eternity of mothers, costumeless and faceless, trudging the filthy muck of battlefields, searching.

Beyond the inept complaints that Kollwitz's work is too bitter and too terrible to experience, the larger criticism that her prints are propaganda pieces and little better than journalism merits attention. Perceiving the relatively contemporary work of Kollwitz comes as something of a shock to our sensibilities, so sharpened to little nuances by the demands of the newer painting and print-making. The Philistine of our day has acquired a new vocabulary. Where once he savored artless insipidities and cackled virtuously over indecently decent art, he now has learned to babble an avant-garde prattle. The once

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beleaguered phrases of texture, rhythm, pattern, line, etc., fall cloyingly from him and he is the same Philistine, still not seeing or experiencing. He has been seduced into accepting a fragment for the whole cloth, for works of art have been made poorer and shabbier by the excision of communicable communal content. By this excision, the singularity of subjective ambiguity has replaced the panoply of richness on all levels that can bejewel a work of art. Avant-garde art is not complex, indeed it is simple-minded. Have we become so feeble that we cannot hearken to a passage of pure color if that color exists for the further purpose of forging a symbol, an image, a fable or a wound? Must the formal substructure be all? Has ever a great work of art been breathed into existence wanting those formal elements which are now esteemed for their skeletal selves? To these rhetorical, no. And yet Kollwitz in our current artistic ambience is misunderstood by sentimentalists or dismissed by formalists. All art is propaganda. All art is tendentious. The communication of an artistic idea is an act of propaganda. The withholding of communal content, an "action" of subjective revelation, however private, is willfully tendentious in its anti-tendentiousness or in its expression of *selbst-tendenz*, to resort to an invention in German. To carp at Kollwitz for her propaganda, her literary or journalistic qualities is cant. And cant is what we must excise, not content.

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Edward L. Katzenbach, Jr.

U. S. Military Policy and the Lesser Objectives*

AN IMAGINATIVE HISTORIAN has drawn up a list of the major changes in warfare made over the past 1110 years. The total list is divided into three columns of almost equal length. The first comprises major developments over the *thousand* years prior to 1847. The second tabulates comparable innovations in the *century*, 1847-1947. The third and last column notes only those fabulous strides which have been made in military technology in the *decade* after the opening of the atomic age, the decade 1947-1957. The end product of these changes is shriveled time, an infinitely small world.

That brilliant scientist, the late John von Neuman, pointed out several years ago that "soon existing nations will be as unstable in war as a nation the size of Manhattan Island would have been in a contest fought with the weapons of 1900." If it is remembered that by 1900 the revolution of the repeating weapons had already taken place, and machine guns and fragmentation artillery shells are imagined as being fired on tiny Manhattan Island, a proper sense of claustrophobic oppression should result. The moment predicted has now arrived.

* Those of us in the field of military policy are often asked two devastatingly difficult questions. The first is: what measures can we take to coordinate our military and foreign policies more closely? The second is: what should we be doing that we are not doing and which does not cost money? This article is a painful effort to answer both questions simultaneously and to outline these all-important lesser objectives in politically feasible terms.

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The situation with which we are presently confronted is surprisingly like the one generally predicted some ten years ago. It is appallingly true that the outlines of each succeeding decade—in all their grandeur and horror—are predictable in advance. Yet we seem unable to plan our actions in advance. The central question of military policy, whether or not technology has brought strategy to a dead end, has not been answered to the satisfaction of any group of knowledgeable people. This problem of how to fight the war of the future has not absorbed more of the time of intelligent people than it deserves, but it has taken attention away from what one might call the lesser objectives of military policy. The perspective of this article has nothing to do with war in its military form. No mention will be made of the myriad of wars—Central, General, Maritime, Limited, Limited Nuclear, Accidental or Catalytic—which we *might* fight and about which our contemporaries are worrying. This article treats rather the military organization of the United States as a living institution which is creating impressions on friend and foe alike, and influencing them for better or for worse on a day to day basis. The argument is that in the world in which we live, this may be our military's most important function.

As we see ourselves, as others see us, are we coordinating our foreign policy with our military policy, or does the latter appear to give the lie to the former? Does the world view us as we view ourselves? More important still, do we ever really stop to ask ourselves these questions? And can we see the answers through the fog of confusing detail?

One cannot help but be struck with the frequency with which one encounters voids of theory, disassociated development, peopleless plans in military discussion. Yet this is completely understandable. There are two mutually supporting imponderables which manacle any free discussion of military policy: the myth of technology on the one hand and the enduring illusion of human reasonableness on the other.

In the field of technology the military are being constantly

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baited with that aged affirmation that they are preparing for the next war in terms of the last one. And in military history there is roughly as much truth in this as there is in the allegation that the diplomats seek to prevent each new war by following policies diametrically opposed to those which involved their nations in the last one. But while it is true that such stability of policy is a pleasant opiate, it is also true that eternal technological development may be an opiate too. Technological advance may be exciting, but in itself it holds no answers to policy problems. In fact, it always raises new ones. Technical development may be slow and difficult, but it is never so slow nor so difficult as trying to determine the military use of whatever is under development. The history of warfare will substantiate the claim that how to *make* a weapon is a problem far more soluble than how to *use* it. Military doctrine invariably struggles along in the distant wake of changing military technology.

Hence, the great temptation in military planning, and it is one to which good men and true generally succumb, is to project technical development and then to substantiate the requirement for it. Rather than surrender to this temptation with all its horrid pitfalls, our policy-makers should perhaps do what students of foreign policy would have them do, i.e. base future military requirements on future political requirements. But it is far easier to fit military requirements to a model future war than it is to imagine a political structure and from this determine a military organization to cope with it. Given the complexity of world political problems, it is no wonder that there has been a flight to the relatively peaceful haven of advanced research where problems appear considerably more limited and slightly more soluble.

One illustration may make this interplay between requirement and development more clear. A great deal has been written about what is wrong with the atomic plane development. There has been discussion of organizational lapses, underfunding, and so forth. But has there been any discussion of the military requirement for an atomic plane? It would be interest-

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ing to know how many times the alleged need has changed over the years, and how radically. Do we know just how we will use an atomic plane in warfare? Or are we developing this sort of thing simply to impress the peoples of the world?

The first deterrent to clear thinking about our military organization is that layers of technicians, batteries of operations analysts, and a diversity of curious and exotic weapons have tended to distract our cooperate attention from the fact that war is basically political, that the military organization is leading a political life of its own day in and day out. Strangely enough, the real problem in military policy in the mid-twentieth century would seem to be to put people back into our calculations, people with hopes, aspirations, preferences and prejudices, people in all their human unreasonableness.

Perhaps the first step towards a moderately realistic understanding of the problems of defense policy is a basic appreciation of the fact that military policy is determined much as are other policies—tax, commercial, or farm. Large numbers of people make it, many of whom would be astonished—and horrified—if they knew they were. It is no more than a truism to say that the Joint Chiefs of Staff are circumscribed with respect to any number of policy areas. Certainly Reserve policy and National Guard policy are determined more by history plus Congressional pressure than they are by professional military advice. In other areas policy is a compromise amongst conflicting interests arguing from unprovable assumptions. In sum, while survival, judging from the time and money spent on it, may be considered the first law of nature, the determination of its interpretation is open to the usual human fallacies. Or, to put the same thought somewhat differently, the frequently used term “calculated risk” should be read “preferred risk”—even in this, the technically most advised nation on earth.

Furthermore, these preferences are not necessarily consistent at all, any more than they are in other fields of national policy. Just as many who cry loudest for economy in government vote steadily for spending measures, so those who favor a given

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foreign policy do not necessarily support its military counterpart. In the United States, as in other countries, this has been the rule rather than the exception. The reason is that while the military tend to think in a series of finite futures, a war tomorrow or in 1960, 1965, or 1970, those with an interest in foreign policy tend to think only in terms of the crisis of today, or at most of tomorrow, with but few exceptions. After all, the diplomats do not have to order hardware. Thus, despite liaison sections, coordinating committees, exchange briefings, and all the paraphernalia of interdepartmental togetherness, there are apt to be serious gaps between foreign policy and military policy. And this problem is a serious one for our military policy as the visible extension of our foreign policy. The first lends credibility or incredibility to the second.

These gaps can best be understood if the United States' overall security policy is examined from the point of view of both the enemy and our allies. How credible from the military viewpoint are our diplomatic declarations with respect to these policy areas: Deterrence, NATO, Aid to the Underdeveloped Countries, Disarmament?

Deterrence is subject to overlapping definitions. The ultimate deterrent is designed to prevent an all-out attack on the United States. On this there is general agreement—despite the fact that so little is known about the psychology of fear that one really does not know whether strength encourages or discourages aggression. Whether our military structure is also designed to deter a series of other eventualities is, of course, highly debatable. But since almost a decade and a half of military testimony insists that the United States does not maintain the military wherewithal, particularly in the area of transportation, to deter all types of aggression, the basic definition of deterrence is probably the most unequivocally acceptable. But how consistent is it?

If a preventive war is defined as unthinkable, then whatever deterrent force we have goes into operation only as the enemy makes the first strike. It follows then that the hallmark of a policy

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of deterrence thus delimited lies in a built-in capacity to absorb the enemy's first blow. The question then revolves around the problem of a first strike on what. And if the answer is given in terms of our ability to absorb an enemy first strike on our retaliatory force, then the policy response must be priority for the defense of these forces, i.e., essentially defense of the planes of our bomber force, our Strategic Air Command and our Naval Carriers. But if, without going into the technicalities of this problem, one answers in broader terms, that we must be prepared for a more generalized attack on our civilian population,—and surely unless this contingency is seriously considered, deterrence works to the enemy's advantage and not our own—then our military posture and our stated position appear incompatible. Objectively considered, and no matter what we may say to the contrary, our military policy appears aggressive—just as does that of the USSR. For neither the USSR nor the United States has taken measures to minimize the effects of the other's first atomic blow.

The realization that we must make our actions back up our stated policy gives foreign policy importance to the dull and bedraggled subject of our civil defense program. This whole program, if it can be dignified by that title, has been built on the sands of shifting premises from its very inception. Indeed one might go so far as to say that, weird as many of the projections of the future of war may be, there is nothing quite like the present emanations of this phantom-like agency. The Evacuation Route signs on the highways, the radio instructions as to the station to which one should turn in case of emergency—so futile for those of us without transistors,—all give one a strange sense of unreality. Yet there are sensible and agreed-upon measures which could and should be taken, and which have not been.

Most of the civil defense programs about which one hears are dramatic and expensive. Most are shelter programs and so costly that few will back them. This automatically puts them beyond the scope of this article. But there are certain less dra-

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matic measures which, if taken, might reassure foreign policy-making bodies abroad that we are in fact preparing to give the enemy the initiative in all-out war. They might give greater credibility to policy statements decrying any intention on our part to launch a preventive or, as the Soviets call it, "Pre-emptive War."

All of us know that in case of atomic attack our credit structure would collapse immediately, for our world is built on the installment plan. All of us also know that in the chaos of a post-atomic attack situation our precious lack of discipline might lead to anarchy. Finally, all of us know that unless legislation is on the books as well known, its effectiveness is reduced to a minimum. The very first need therefore is for widely publicized legislation to minimize atomic disaster.

A second step, again one which requires only an "aye," could be taken to implement one segment of the legislation suggested above. At the present time no troops are being actively trained in disaster work. The reason is that this has not been made a part of any one of the armed services legislated missions. It belongs obviously with the Reserve and National Guard units who as yet stand untrained in this field. Only when these essentially home guard military organizations really understand that their role in atomic war is to guard our homes and reorganize our society will they be able to fulfill their mission and give credence to our stated foreign policy.

As regards *NATO*, the real problem—and real problems tend to be insoluble—is that the United States has never been clear in its policy as to who its friends are, and our friends have never been quite sure who the enemy is. To Europeans the United States has always appeared irritatingly anti-colonial; to colonials, shot at by American rifles, tanks and planes, the United States has always appeared markedly colonialist. This situation has been rendered more unstable because of uncertainty in *NATO* over the identity of the common cause. In the matter of Greece, for example, which has been considered the greater threat over the past decade: the USSR or Turkey?

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And which countries share which fear? Because of such different attitudes and perspectives there is nothing approaching a package solution.

Our friends abroad are not going to forget references in Congress to the expendability of their troops as cannon fodder. Pride is always going to work against the ideal that each country should contribute what it can contribute best. Envy, particularly of American pay scales, will always be present. Fear and/or a national predilection for standing alone will keep a Norway or a France from making a maximum contribution. All of these problems will remain. They are the price of national sovereignty.

Yet once again one cannot help but feel that our military policy could be brought more closely into line with our foreign policy by the pursuit of slightly different courses of action than those thus far pursued. Parenthetically, this is not to say that important, and in some cases incredibly great, strides have not been made towards inter-allied cooperation.

There are two areas of policy in particular which have not been explored to the extent that they could be. One is the exchange of military information, the other is weapon standardization.

Currently one of our most vigorously pursued programs is that of bringing foreign military officers to United States military schools, particularly at the staff and command level. But three questions with respect to this fine program come to mind as worth further exploration. First, one cannot help but feel that military security could be lifted rather more than it is to foreign nationals. To be sure, this is no longer the problem it was several years ago when we were asking our allies to fight with us in an atomic war without giving them all the relevant facts of such a war. This was an appalling policy deviation, one which rendered military cooperation quite impossible, no matter how different the picture may have been on the diplomatic level. But even now it seems that we are not as open as we

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could afford to be. There is a dreadful bitterness which comes from exclusion.

Second, there is a place in our military school system for exchanges on the instructor level. At present foreign nationals do no teaching in our schools at all, although our own military officers are the first to admit that the experience of, say, an Indonesian officer in guerilla warfare, gives him qualifications which few United States officers possess. One might hope that similar exchanges could also be arranged in the developing schools for Foreign Service officers.

Third, and this is really an extension of the second point, more time should be spent in our military schools in the study of comparative military systems. No matter what innovations the atomic age may have made in military strategy and military tactics, it is still important that our military understand, for example, that British and Canadian officers are much more inclined to retreat under certain circumstances than are United States officers. If cooperation is to be maximized, then national attitudes towards certain types of tactics must be fully understood. The famous line of General Smith of the U.S. Marine Corps on the occasion of his division's withdrawal through the Communist Chinese lines in Korea would hardly have been a sensation in Great Britain. To the military of a country which has controlled the sea and which has hence made withdrawal from land not only possible but profitable, Smith's phrase "Retreat? Hell!" followed by the explanation that the division was simply advancing in the opposite direction, would seem unnecessary and perhaps even a bit ridiculous. If such differences in attitude are understood, then cooperation should presumably be easier not only between the military but between the diplomats to whom they are advisors.

As regards the other area of cooperation which needs further exploration, it is indisputable that weapons standardization and weapons procurement policy for NATO has not done as much to seal solid relationships between the participant countries as one could have hoped. This is explainable in terms of history,

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for one of the touchiest of political and military subjects has always been weapons procurement and the desire of each country to hold on to its own. Parenthetically, the simpler the weapon, the longer and more bitter the argument has usually been. In this connection, one must note that one of the minor miracles of our times is the adoption, if not as yet the implementation, of a policy of standard small arms ammunition for NATO.

Of course the USSR and her satellites reached a great degree of standardization a number of years ago. But then the USSR dictates policy rather than negotiates.

There are many reasons why standardization of weapons has not progressed as rapidly as one could have hoped. The existence of stockpiled weapons is one. Another is the fact that every country likes to do a certain amount of independent study, evaluation, and procurement of these items. Furthermore, this is particularly true given the predisposition of the lesser members of NATO to have relatively little faith in the more conventional weapons of the major power, namely the United States.

European military men recognize that the genius of the United States in military affairs has been in transportation and logistics, not in weapons development (except in very recent years in the field of missiles, particularly with respect to American advances in miniaturization and guidance systems). Neither in small arms, nor in artillery, nor in tanks, nor even in certain classes of planes has the United States been up to other nations in quality. It is no secret that a United States tank in any class is never on a par at any given moment of time with the tank of some other country. It is no secret that virtually every new development in aircraft carrier design, except for atomic engines, has been a British development. The list could be indefinitely extended. It is for this reason that it seems so wasteful that we have not seen fit to adopt a greater number of foreign weapons designs since the war. Much jealousy could have been avoided if we had been willing to adopt a

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French light tank, a Belgian rifle, a British heavy tank for all of the NATO countries. How much more could have been accomplished had we been willing to set up joint research and development boards with our allies?

The thesis here is a very simple one indeed. It is after all nothing more than a suggestion to implement the truism that as trust and faith are expressed, so in proportion do they grow.

Turning now to the question of *aid to the underdeveloped countries*, it can be said as a blanket statement that foreign aid is the tithe of greatness. All nations have paid it at the time of their greatness, and it has always been the subject of warm debate. While the form of the argument may change through the ages, the substance does not. Ten years of debate on foreign aid programs break down into quite simple differences in assumptions. The first set of assumptions are basically moral. The debate here revolves around two problems: the moral validity of bribery and the moral practicality of world-wide charity. As a corollary problem, no one knows where bribery should end or charity begin. Second, there is the problem of accountability. When one casts one's bread upon the waters of the world, measuring the return is just not possible. How can one measure an increase in democracy, or greater loyalty to the free world?

However, even if the basic problems of foreign aid programs are forever destined to remain in the Never-Never Land of endless dispute, there may be certain lines of thought worth pursuing towards a closer coordination of our economic and military policies. One step in the right direction came last year when a school was finally set up for officers assigned to military aid posts abroad. Prior to the inauguration of this school—which is presently under Congressional attack, by the way,—our officers left for aid posts with no prior briefings, and had to learn their roles on the spot and by osmosis. It is encouraging to note, too, that as our military aid programs have been more sophisticated over the years, they have been better geared to local needs.

Yet surely what is needed is a more radical approach, a pol-

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icy which, instead of maintaining separate programs for military and non-military training, tied all technical aid programs together. Suppose that a Point Four Program in technical assistance were integrated with the military aid program? After all, this is done and very successfully so in the Israeli Army where farm techniques and military tactics are taught side by side.

If military technicians and civilian technicians could work hand in hand, there would be a number of advantages. Certainly the Communist tirades against American militarism would have less meaning. Certainly military training for foreign nationals would have more meaning and appeal if in conjunction with it agricultural and trade instruction were offered which would tend to fit men better for their civilian occupations. This kind of corporate training could be given to the most receptive group in the nations aided, namely the young men of military age. Finally, this approach might go far towards allaying the criticism of the aid programs which has been growing over the years. And it would cost no additional money.

There is one other aspect of our total military program which has been a constant worry to many of us for the past five years or so. This has been the lack of any truly comprehensive study of *arms control measures*. Many thoughtful persons have been struck by the frightening paradox of increasingly complex weapons systems in combination with increasingly less controllable weapons. What has been happening is that electronics have vastly increased the span of the individual's control without comparable controls over the actions of the individual. Perhaps the ultimate will be a long-range weapon, a Minute Man intercontinental missile, for example, which can be fired by one man. Who then will control This Man? One of the great miracles of the Korean War was that some Communist submariner did not do what a German submariner did during the Second World War, namely, fire without orders on the helpless crowded shipping in Pusan Harbor, thus precipi-

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tating a new and greatly expanded war. How does one control the men who control the weapons of modern war?

One cannot anticipate with any great hopefulness that the USSR will be willing to negotiate any true arms control. But one also knows with reasonable certainty that, if let go until after *circa* 1970, arms control will have become so unreliable as to be virtually impossible. Technically the problem will have become too difficult. Hence intense efforts should be made now to bring arms control techniques well into hand.

So far these efforts have not been made. Our delegates to the Geneva Conference last year were by their own admission woefully unprepared for their task. Hence it was with a sense of great relief, and some bitterness given the lateness of the hour, that your author read on July 30th—after the first draft of this article had been finished—that the perennial Pentagon trouble-shooter, Mr. Charles Coolidge of Boston, was once again riding *The Federal* to Washington to lead a study group on disarmament. Yet the very fact that Mr. Coolidge has been called only after several years of arms negotiations with the Russians does not put this nation in the most peaceful frame of reference in the eyes of either friend or enemy.

There is little to be said in conclusion. It is all too obvious that only the surface problems, the lesser objectives, have been touched upon here. Perhaps the only point that should be emphasized is that as weapons have become more precise from a technical point of view, they have become less precise from a political one. This in turn means that their political utility is decreasing with accelerating rapidity. And this in turn means that the technical aspects of war to which we are paying increasing attention are actually becoming less important. National attention should be turned to what are presently the lesser objectives.

One might even take the position that the weapons situation is so serious that what has been said here is already obsolete.

New Poets of New England

THE FOOLISH CAT THAT DIED ON HALLOWE'EN

Under the final straw of this light loss
The summer's bridge has fallen down,
And like this cat that played about our legs
Lies buried in bright leaves.

Soft children who once cradled her
And vaguely sang their infant love
Observe the make-shift ritual
Without a word.

One dreams of pumpkins carved and lit
Against the horror of his Hallowe'en;
This older boy, my arrow aimed at time,
Is stonily withdrawn.

At ankle height, the brother of this cat
Of fuzzy frailties and sudden strengths
Storms straws at every wind.
The breezy cosmos blows him steady good.

Well may they share the mansions of their house,
For they who promise nothing are not bound.
By blood to mourn a loss.
But above this natural scene the old leaves twist.

Leon O. Barron

New Poets of New England

THE PIONEER'S FIRST PREMISE

Always in a half-light
Not of sun or moonlight always
But of something given by his glance,
He sought for certainty beyond the edge of chance,

Belied the Rubens bellies and soft arms
Thrown carelessly on sofas storeys high.
He fled from grossness and pursued nuance.

Thus left the city in its darkest hour,
The neon's red glare having blared itself
Silent as the jukebox in the empty bar,
The subway's last pulsations merged with sleep;

And wormed along the coiled way
Of labyrinths and earth's browned scars,
To all appearances majestically
Oblivious to fat fronds, ooze beneath his feet.

But meditation has its values, scrutiny (that faery quality) pays off:
He heard the cry of kissing in the serpent's hiss,

And knew that here alone was his discovered land,
His private place divorced of disaffection.
Here honesty stood naked and proclaimed
That quiet screaming place where earth gives way.

Leon O. Barron

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AN AUTUMN LECTURE

The bell proclaims the changing of one's guard.
The clock is punctual. Now all
The students seconding its works
Appear and quietly attend
The chair that scrapes, the gravely sounded cough.

The lecturer's appearance is well timed.
In practiced counter-tenor he pours out
His notes, and not one liquid sound is lost.
All is absorbed by the well-tempered air,
Ear-marked for future use.

No hand however beats in truce or opposition
And the speaker finds such silence too profound;
Only above the door he hears suggestive sound:
It is the clock that busily emits
Its gentle raspberry of passing tone.

Therefore he scans the young who can afford
Impatience with their hour. His eyes stand firm
Against all rebels, and his breathless voice
Now winds around the shriller stories of
His mind. Against their petulance he builds
An Attic fortress on the side of time.

(The virtue of one's age is avarice
That chucks time's dearest and best-rounded face,
Vows constancy, and only pleads to serve
The altar of communion with the clock.)

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And why indeed should anyone object?
His repertoire is scaled beyond reproach.
The teacher stands for everything recorded:
The poem's beat, the play's division,
Soul's first alarm and last revision,

The torso of each period neatly hacked,
Respectably invested, gravely filed
So might the ghost of Hamlet's father scream,
"My son, my son, dismember me."

But they are on the window's side, that glass
That separates the then and now.
The sight of autumn sounds no symbols there.
Time means no more than space and all is fair.
"O you," he sings, a point between his first
And second clause, "I bring you truth.
Eternity unwinds above the door."

But having left their bodies in his hands,
They play in time's most metered space,
They delve in other leaves than those he reads.
Alas, the bell will summon them to leave,
To gather up their notes, their books, themselves,
To pierce their teacher with their untaught smiles,
Their thoughtless haste to merge with autumn flame.

Leon O. Barron

JACOB

All, everywhere, and now, and high and low,
The moonlight meadows, shadows, blows its candles
In the corn, strikes midnight barns, and fondles
Walls, elms, and every sleeping thing below.

Mists pad and curl and cool. Effortless air
Ladders with lanterned angels up and down.
I stand like Jacob heavened in, aware
Of warless music sung above the town.

If it were only so! The awakened bell
Of cattle in the night, the shining span
Of almost wings on grass, the world's All's Well
An always sent to somewhere private man.

Who in a deeper night wrestles black Why,
Finds blessing in the wound, the limping thigh.

Arnold Kenseth

New Poets of New England

MISS CUSACK'S FAMILIARS

Miss Cusack
lives in the downstairs flat
with two pianos and an aging brother.
She raises music
and teaches cats
to love each other

(milk in the bowl).
Her students play duets;
she plucks the notes from the hands of the stammering young,
her ten bean fingers whole.
Up through the odor of cats
comes Mendelssohn.

Everyone learns
poco a poco by heart.
There are five full grown, there are thirteen mewling kits
and more unborn
to hear Mozart.
What does she tell the cats

their dappled flanks,
their silently twitching tails
half hid, half seen under the Morris chairs?
Why do they wink,
unmuzzling smiles?
What's in the air

in the downstairs flat?
Certainly not that.

Maxine W. Kumin

The Massachusetts Review

THE EDGE

Always the sea gulls flap in pools
Etched in the puddingstone, and peck their prey
From shattered shells, and the sea goes out
Saying drearily, *fools gulls fools*;
Spills backward suck by suck over the little sea
Trapped in the raddled channel. Men shout
In the harbor, comparing the catch,
And the intended lobster trips its latch.

All holy days the mothers come
With scarlet pails and playthings and their young,
Their hoarded ardor, rallied for the sea;
Readied with bottle or the thumb
For bathing. They are anointed, they are wrung
Dry, petted and swatted, fervently
All but naked before God;
The diapered, the sun festered, the salted brood.

Particularly we who climb the rocks,
Applaud the speedboats, spread our blankets out,
Caress the sand and lust for sun
And make burnt offerings upon a box,
The also simple we who doubt;
Bless us with omens as our children run
Brown and ungente down to turn the tide;
Fold back the waters that they run beside.

Maxine W. Kumin

New Poets of New England

REPORT ON A GUNNERY EXERCISE

It is all reported when the pattern is.
I stood at the center of distance,
where the range is zero,
and saw

that in point or train
a gun must aim at something.
So it went,
troubling the blue tone
with jerk and swing,
uneasy synchro's
constantly correcting
then
through silence gathered at that
rifled O was
metal riding

There!

In the vulnerable air
configurations
which of course the clever
mechanism had predicted, blotting
and drifting in the clear sky.
Of substances that met
in the meeting where
the cross hairs meet
nothing is recorded.

One assumes

they fall through air
not violently to the sea
while practice pilots
or evading drones ride
some scarred mood or fabric home.

G. Stanley Koehler

The Massachusetts Review

OVER THE SIDE

His motion to me is the pull of a line
through water. Horizontal as a fish he swims there
beyond seeing, and drowned, beyond my well-wishing.
I think how gracefully he moves
against the stiff hull dividing him from air,
and would throw him some rag of my compassion.
But thought enters bare into that realm
where all are naked, and I can not pity him.

Yet pitiful is the skin between his blood
and the sea. Again he moves, in the gesture
by which his depth is measured. Shall I not
who could fathom this reach out to him
in his own motion? Stifling with more love
than goes through a tube, I swim to where he mounts
toward me, and the image of himself recovered
twofold in the shallow brine of my eyes.

G. Stanley Koehler

COMING THROUGH FOG

Coincidence comes quietly
in fog. The lack of vision
makes strange odds, and I feel
a presence touching the flesh,
hands moist as metal.

What it will be is
a thousand in one;
one bell so timed to ours
its warning is not heard, though fear
comes with it like a prow.

G. Stanley Koehler

New Poets of New England

FOOTPRINTS FOR FRESH EARTH

I could have stopped it with a string.
Now comes this mortal dog
and his fellow
crossing the fresh ground where grass should be.
A predictable sortie,

for though the earth has been hauled off
or thrown over,—
old trails buried with the new,—
it does not change a way of running
true to woods, in a changed scene.

Shadowed they are by trees, arching over
what was the lane.
Shall I shy at them a stone
or two, from that old moraine?
I bend to the past

and as I do I mind
how a warmth like my hand's
hollowed from ice the fresh
space where I stand.
Having felt that wind

off of time, I suppose
something laid down with the leaves
remains, to serve
in patterns of the nerve though earth
turns over and the leaves remove.

G. Stanley Koehler

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NOAH'S CATS

It is not for love they come to us,
Knowing love a debt incurred by others,
But for awhile on earth content to share

Such spoils as we are forced to pour
As milk from our own guilt and vanity.
Nor is it by chance that all cats prey

On creatures that have been for centuries
Symbols for our human souls: though they
Have fur, are mute, they are not animal

And we will find when we must shun at last
The noise and passion of naked conquerors,
The solitude of cats profound and curious.

Look twice upon them, our dark antagonists:
The snake, admonished, sees not what they see;
There was a cat, unseen, in Adam's tree.

Noah bore them on his back around, around
The drowned and sinking earth (they abhor
All water still, for water breaks the spell).

No more is said about the dove: was not
A dove-like skeleton among white feathers found
Upon the mountain when the cats climbed down?

Patricia Coombs

New Poets of New England

THE BIRCH HOUSE

I've loved a girl grown tall and fair
From far-once to now to forever.
I went to her (hear my woe),
Hoping to salve my sorrow
With a wistful whispered wish;
Her reply was plain and knavish:
"I'll never love a homeless man,
Be he boor or bard or baron."
I thought I knew her answer
And made a house of love for her;
Weary work below a birch tree:
A porch approach straight and stately,
A door adorned with dignity,
House for Merlin, home for Mary,
Roofed with leaves and softest twigs,
Tallow-gummy tiles of sprigs.
And now, my ample tempting manse
I'll lease to two lusty tenants,
Two with only one language,
Two birds of love to make one sage,
Cordial thrushes, sparrow-speckled,
Two sprightly-pinioned poets held
High in holy purity,
Birds of Paradise, my plea.
Seven poems they'll daily sing
To fit the vines' entwining,
And I'll record each seven
Whole in the hill, one by one.
To the girl I've coveted
To keep my house, make my bed:
If you refuse my entreaty
On the hill of the birchwood tree,
I swear to all this fearful vow—
I'll build for other girls tomorrow.

Jon Roush

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THE MASS IN THE GROVE

Today I lolled below a mantle
Of leaves grown over by green hazel
And heard, as dawn drew on the dingle,
The cock thrush's skillful canticle.
He drew a dancing stanza's design,
Alluring sign and fluent symbol.

Distant his nest, wisdom his nature;
The herald brown-downed had flown this far
From rich and refined Carmathenshire
To the heavens of the valley here.
So verbose for one with a visa,
He had come to please a girl, I'm sure.

Yes, it was Morfudd who sent him hence,
May's foster-son of song-filled cadence
Adorned all around with ornaments:
Boughs of wild flowers and mild May scents
Clung so like a cloak that I couldn't tell
The wings from the mantle from the winds.

There was nothing here, by the Great God,
But shining gold in the altar shade.
I listened to every lucid word,
The lengthy rite delightfully read
To the waiting natives without a halt,
The faultless words in a faultless wood.

Then the lifting on the ash tree hill
Of leafy holy wafers awhile,
And the slender fluent nightingale,
The forest border's winsome minstrel,
Joins the thrush in a lively litany,
Singing bright as any sanctus bell.

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Rising, the sacrifice was alive
And bold in brake and heaven above.
Invoking God the Father, they gave
The votive chalice and chant of love.
I am at peace in the sound of the psalm
Bred in the calm of the birch-bough grove.

Dafydd ap Gwilym, XIV century,
translated by Jon Roush

THE VISITORS

The deer are in the morning
Among the trees;
How cool the grass is
They crop, still with dew.

Delicate and clean, they tread
Softly together;
Attentive as they bend,
The fierce horned and the soft.

How welcome in sun they are
To the eyes of men!
How beautiful and from
A far place come.

Cornelia Veenendaal

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WINTER

They will not wholly forget
The terrible winter this year.
Even boys in their hoods,
Who stone from the Pont Marie
Isles of ice in the green Seine,
Will mention again
The cold that imprisoned leaf and root
In the south of France,
And buried Italy in snow.

Because it is unfamiliar,
The frost is hard to endure;
The old, to be sure, remember
Another season like this,
But that was long ago.

Winter camps on Paris.
The Guard of the Bastille
Cannot put to rout
Troops strategic at every meter.
The invasion can be withstood
Only by living.

Men shoulder sacks of coal;
Shopkeepers pull their shawls close.
The feet of students trudge at double pace
Over stones ringing with frost.
And the monumental walls,
Blackened with the cancer
Of centuries, stand in the incised air,
Implacable as the eyes of the young.

Cornelia Veenendaal

New Poets of New England

IDENTIFICATION

Arts are disguise, like dreams, outlandish costumes
Within which ordinary frightened children
Take on the amazing proportion of the outlaws
They were not; we are set free in our masks,
Brave enough to speak our hearts in our funnyfaces,
Braver than Lion Hearts or Helens, whatever we pretend
We could be. We are capable of terrible derring-do.

Then we confront our arts, we meet the mirrors
Along the gilded ballroom. All fancied up,
Dressed fit to kill, rouge noses, faces blacked out
Or whiskered with the raped lock, we confront
And eye and measure who's in the pads and pillows.
Who could it be? Suspending the hoarse falsetto,
The false basso, we falter, fidget and stare.

Then the gentle person, larger than children,
Disguised in something dusty, the dun colors
Of kindness, someone apparently going
To the ball in the guise of just a man,
Stops and lays down his hand on our art's shoulder.
Miraculously enough he calls us by name.
He is the dancing master: Come, he says, the music
Is starting and we are going to have the prizes.

Jean Pedrick

*William C. Harvard and
Robert F. Steamer*

Louisiana Secedes: Collapse of a Compromise

THE SOUTH may not be the nation's number one political problem, as some northerners assert, but politics is the South's number one problem." Such was V. O. Key's opening judgement in his classic study of politics in the South, which first appeared in 1950. Latterly the statement might well be rephrased to read: Segregation may not be the nation's number one political problem, but integration is the South's number one political phobia. At no time since the Compromise of 1896 has single-issue politics so completely dominated the region, even though the one-party system has continuously depended on this issue for its perpetuation and has consistently used it as a means of suppressing cleavages which are normal and healthy in a democratic polity. The situation since 1954 has steadily deteriorated, with the states most susceptible to racist appeals exhibiting the earliest symptoms of a demonic closure, followed by a gradual widening of the area of intransigence as indicated by the incidents in peripheral states such as Virginia and Arkansas.

Among the states of the deep South, Louisiana had seemingly managed to develop the most successful substitute for genuine two-party politics as well as the most likely conditions for a smooth transition to the state of affairs prescribed by the

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Supreme Court's recent decisions in segregation cases. Even though Louisiana, like the other Southern states, rapidly set up special legislative barriers against racial integration, it was not until quite recently that a potential alteration in the political balance of the state resulted from segregationist pressures. Significantly, this incident involves national as well as state party and factional organizations, and may therefore be a portent for the future of the Democratic Party in the South and for presidential nominating politics in 1960.

On December 6, 1958 the Democratic National Committee, by a vote of 91 to 15, confirmed Camille Gravel's claim to retain his position as national committeeman from Louisiana, despite the fact that the Louisiana State Central Committee of the Democratic Party had formally ousted him in a special meeting in October and replaced him with its vice-chairman, Jett Talbot. The implications of these actions for both national and state politics are uncommonly broad, and the factors which produced them cannot be interpreted in terms of the usual simplistic explanation that this is an additional manifestation of the frustrating sectional division in the Democratic Party. To reduce the issue to the latter terms is to misconstrue the political history of Louisiana hopelessly and to underestimate the subtleties of a federated political system.

Louisiana is unique among the states of the deep South in having restored and institutionalized a pattern of politics roughly paralleling what, for want of a more accurate term, may be referred to as the liberal-conservative dichotomy characterizing American politics as a whole. The Louisiana situation can be appreciated only in historical retrospect because its development was obscured by the excesses which invariably accompany revolutions, even bloodless ones.

When Huey Long was elected to the Louisiana Railroad Commission in 1918 he was not merely embarking on the most fabulous autocratic career in the history of American politics, a career which was to end in the Kingfish's assassination in 1935 and a delayed, inglorious epitaph in the form of 1939 news-

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paper headlines exposing the corruption of his self-anointed successors. A more memorable, but less newsworthy, contribution is the fact that Huey Long was successful in breaking the "rule by gentlemen" that had dominated the state since the end of reconstruction. Long's continued popularity and the apparently permanent faction that bears his name are based on something more substantial than mass hypnosis by a masterly political spellbinder. For Long and Longism represented the triumph of the previously submerged but incipiently rebellious political forces whose earlier attempts to overthrow the domination of the planter-merchant alliance aborted in the Populist and Socialist movements.

Like the other Southern states, Louisiana was the victim of the Republican-Bourbon (and Whig) post-reconstruction compromise under which the Negroes were returned to a position of complete economic dependence on their former masters in exchange for passive Southern acquiescence in the national policy aims of the Republicans. Under such a politics the Negro became what W. J. Cash referred to as the Proto-Dorian bond of the South—an omnipresent threat used by the ruling elite to allay the stirrings of economic and social protest by hill-farmers and laborers. In the face of a half-century of such frustration it was hardly to be expected that the "eminent dichotomy" which is characteristic of American politics could be restored without residues from the past which tend to blur political alignments and to endow partisanship with a bitterness that urges in the direction of annihilation.

The politics which resulted from the rise and perpetuation of Longism in Louisiana has been labeled by one observer as "cohesive bifactionalism." On the one hand there is the Long faction, with its persisting leadership and its solid core of support drawn from the hill and cut-over parishes (counties) and latterly from the growing urban labor population. The program of this coalition has always tended toward rural liberalism or a revived populism, but has recently demonstrated a tendency to enlarge its scope to include the problems of greatest concern to

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the industrial worker. The anti-Long group, on the other hand, is far less clear-cut in terms either of leadership or the direction of its policy. Although the moving force of the anti-Long faction consists of the once-dominant business, professional and planter element routed by Huey Long in the late twenties and thirties, neither its leadership nor its program has been stabilized as effectively as that of the Long group. Even though the anti-Long coalition has alternated in office with the Long faction, no single person has managed to establish himself as unqualified for longer than a single term in the governor's office, and policy has waivered between a voter-oriented reform program and an attempt to restore the governmental quietism of the pre-Long era.

The positions of these factions relative to the national Democratic party are unequivocal, although this situation, too, has been obscured at times by dominating practical considerations arising out of sectionalism. The Long faction has been fairly consistent in being in either overt or *sub rosa* alliance with the national organization and in its acceptance of the general framework of national Democratic ideology. It was neither accident nor expediency that made Huey Long a key figure in Roosevelt's nomination in 1932. His program as governor of Louisiana from 1928 to 1930 anticipated the New Deal to some extent; and Roosevelt's effective merger of farmer and laborer into a solid bloc which overrode previous sectionally structured political divisions paralleled Long's achievement in Louisiana on a national scale. And, egocentricity apart (if it can be set apart), Long's break with the New Deal was affected by his idea that Roosevelt was moving too slowly and on too narrow a front.

Furthermore, Longism, with its lack of emphasis on the race question, differs markedly from the usual Southern demagoguery. Even though the Long faction has apparently had neither the inclination nor the support necessary to adopt a positive program for improving race relations, the entire question was fairly well sublimated in other (and more relevant)

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activities for nearly a quarter of a century. During this time the Negro population shared proportionately in the benefits of Louisiana welfare programs; and, after the judicial invalidation of the white primary, Negro leadership delivered solid blocs of votes for the Longs. In 1948, Earl Long disassociated himself from the state Democratic committee's endorsement of the Dixiecratic candidates as the nominees of the Louisiana Democratic party and was responsible for legislation which enabled the Truman-Barkley ticket to appear on the ballot, albeit as an independent slate. He and Senator Russell Long also gave leadership to such organized support as Stevenson had in Louisiana in 1952 and 1956.

The anti-Long faction, on the other hand, has displayed symptoms of the schizophrenia more common to the deep South as a whole. As long as the Republicans retained national office and there was no effective challenge to the monopolization of the Democratic party in the state, the reconstruction compromise remained in effect. But the simultaneous domination of national office by a liberal Democratic party and the rise of a local Democratic faction which was liberal in its ends, if not in its means, provided a double frustration for the old ruling elite which it has not subsequently overcome. The actions of the two most prominent recent leaders of the anti-Long forces, former governors Sam Jones (1940-1944) and Robert Kennon (1952-1956) provide ample testimony to the desire of this uneasy coalition to identify the state Democratic party with typical Southern conservatism. Jones, a successful corporation lawyer, has been consistently associated with the states-rights movement from its Grass-Roots inception through the Dixiecratic revolt and into the presidential fusion with the Republicans in 1952 and 1956. As befits the "gentleman-as-reformer," however, he has always remained on the fringe of the more vociferous white supremacy crowd. Within six months of his election as governor under the Democratic label, Kennon was engaged in an all-out effort on behalf of General Eisenhower's 1952 campaign, and he again led the Democrats for Eisenhower

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in 1956. Kennon has not, however, been associated with the use of racist appeals to divert Long support to conservative candidates.

This dual rebellion that conservatism has been waging in Louisiana against the local radicalism of the Longs and the liberalism of the national Democratic party since the early thirties has nearly always contained overtones of appeal to racial fears. The 1944 Grass-Roots movement and even the Dixiecratic movement, however, made almost as much of the themes of local self-determination, governmental restraint and businesslike administration as they did of opposition to civil rights.

The new militancy of the segregationists since the school desegregation decisions of the Supreme Court, however, has tended to obscure the connections between the racial issue and anti-Long conservatism in Louisiana; and the Gravel contretemps may very well portend the destruction of a very delicate balance of politics which now exists in the state. Since racism is the one issue that cuts across the factional lines so far as the rank and file is concerned, any deviation from the Long policy of quiet sublimation would completely upset the equilibrium.

The main protagonists in the current battle, in addition to Gravel himself, are Governor Earl Long and William Rainach, although many peripheral strategists have been involved. Gravel is an old Long supporter and has twice acted as Long's gubernatorial campaign manager in the eighth congressional district. He is hardly the type of person that the casual observer from outside the state would associate with Longism. In fact, Gravel is a sophisticated urbanite who is very much at home with the cosmopolitan liberals of the national party. He is a successful lawyer from Alexandria, a medium-sized central Louisiana city in which his family has been prominent for several generations. In this respect he is more representative of new directions in Longism than of the old populist core. His adherence to the Long faction is symptomatic of the fundamental political division in Louisiana. The local conscience Democrat (in both an economic and social sense) has no alternative but

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the Longs if he wishes to be effective politically, even though he may have to connive at certain unaccustomed crudities in practice.

In 1954 Gravel was selected as Democratic committeeman, and was re-elected to the post for a four year term in 1956. From the beginning of his service on the committee he declared that he would support the nominees of the National party and the convention's platform; and subsequent events indicate that his declaration extended even to the civil rights plank. As a member of the advisory council of the committee, he voted in San Francisco to recommend that the party's pledges be redeemed by Congress, and eventually publicly supported the civil rights bill enacted into law by the eighty-fifth Congress. Although this bill was, of course, nothing more than a minimal attempt to guarantee the integrity of the Negro's right to vote, under the no-quarter attitude that is gradually immobilizing all political flexibility in the deep South it was sufficient to mark Gravel as a dangerous scalawag in many circles. But the national committeeman did not stop there; he made a public expression of his opinion on the segregation issue, calling it "morally wrong" and "legally settled." It should be mentioned that Gravel is a prominent lay leader in the Catholic Church and a Knight of Saint Gregory. As is widely known, the church hierarchy has been the most important influence in the state in easing the transition from legal segregation to legal integration, particularly in South Louisiana where its membership constitutes an overwhelming proportion of the population. In the tortured manner in which Southerners whose emotional inhibitions have been sufficiently repressed to allow them to *think* about this issue at all, Gravel was careful to qualify his statement by pointing out that integration in the schools at this time might prove to be a disastrous public policy. While openly admitting the logical contradiction between his pronouncement on the practical aspect of the problem and his moral and legal stand, Gravel nonetheless contends that his moral and legal stand must penetrate the Southern ethos before the practical application

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of desegregation can take place on any extensive scale. Essentially his stand is on behalf of moderation; unfortunately the position of the moderate has become less and less tenable subsequent to his original formulation of these views.

Segregationist leadership has successfully employed the tactic of leveling the full force of its considerable armory of public opinion weapons on any person or group who raises any question regarding its policy of total resistance. State Senator William Rainach, formerly national head of the White Citizens Councils and president of the Louisiana Association of Citizens Councils until his recent announcement as a gubernatorial candidate, has risen to political prominence in Louisiana as a result of his position as unchallenged leader of this movement. Rainach comes from Summerfield in rural north Louisiana, an area which is the focal point of all-out opposition to racial integration in the state. Although a small businessman, Rainach is endowed with the appearance and manner of the hill farmer, which attributes give him immediate access to the ear of groups traditionally associated with the policy of absolute segregation. He has elevated himself to the position of minister plenipotentiary in the segregationist cause largely through his activities as chairman of the legislature's joint interim committee on segregation. This committee has the necessary funds and the authority to act as roving investigator of any event, person or group even remotely connected with the issue, and it has made maximum use of its potential power.

The blurring of alignments which accompanied the revival of the racial question as the central issue of contemporary politics makes it difficult to ascertain whether segregationist leaders are devoted to their cause solely for its own sake or are using it primarily as a means to other ends. And doubts on this point raise the related question whether the political ascendancy of the segregationists results entirely from their own efforts or in part from the unobtrusive backing they have received from an older political leadership. Although perhaps not conclusive, it is worth noting in this connection that Rainach first achieved

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publicity in the senate for his leading role in the passage of a "right to work" law, an act which was subsequently repealed when the Long faction returned to power in 1956. Although Rainach has captured headlines through his unremitting attack on integration, his record on other issues of public policy stands in diametrical opposition to the causes espoused by Earl Long and he has frequently been the object of the caustic epigrams which the governor tosses off in an apparently casual, but highly skillful, manner. In addition, Rainach has had the overt support of Leander Perez (a perennial states-righter, impregnable leader of two parishes on the New Orleans periphery and man of many parts and interests) in some of his major fights. Less conspicuous, but available in cases involving levels of abstraction in the legal arts which are beyond the capacity of Rainach and his closest associates, has been ex-governor Sam Jones.

Naturally Rainach has made much of Gravel's defection to the national Democratic party. In July, 1957, the Segregation Committee, in its initial attempt to remove Gravel, adopted a resolution charging him with espousing racial integration in his official capacity. The resolution condemned Gravel for his stand on the pending civil rights bill and castigated him for an appearance before the American Civil Liberties Union in New Orleans, noting that Gravel had "reaffirmed his support of the Supreme Court decision of May 17, 1954, on segregation—and his hostility to the public policies of the state of Louisiana with regard to separation of the races."

In a public answer to the Committee Resolution, Gravel made two points. First, he argued that under the rules of the Democratic National Committee any charges against him must be filed with the national committee and that in such event "Rainach would find himself in the ridiculous position of asking the national committee to remove me because I supported the Democratic Party and its platform." Secondly, Gravel declared that the action of Rainach and some of the Citizens Councils which "deprived thousands of colored people of their constitutional right to vote is condemned by all fair-minded people,"

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and that essentially the only case against him was the fact that he endorsed the right of all qualified persons to vote, regardless of race.

The Governor did not intervene actively in the dispute, apparently in an attempt to avoid allowing the racial issue to become a dominating one. When queried by the press, he coyly replied that he hoped that a situation would not develop in which the state central committee decided to oust Gravel when the national committee was against it. On September 10, the chairman of the state committee announced that 17 of the committee's 101 members had officially requested a meeting to remove the apostate, but no meeting was called, and in February, 1958, the chairman declared that the movement for ouster had apparently died. There was no doubt in most observers' minds that the Governor's dominant influence over the preponderance of the committee's membership had quietly but effectively stilled the agitation for removal. It also appeared that the Governor's policy of moderation through indirection was vindicated, and that he had tacitly added to his usual practice a "sufficient rope" method of dealing with the anti-Long segregationist leadership.

The fight over Gravel was re-opened with a vengeance in September, 1958, as a result of one of those curious clashes of personality that so frequently cut across issues in Louisiana politics. In a Democratic contest in the eighth congressional district (both Gravel's and Long's home district), Gravel and Long backed different candidates, and Long's candidate lost despite the Governor's active intervention. The fact that the seat had been vacated by the death of Long's brother, Dr. George Long, together with the felt necessity to demonstrate his personal hold on this part of the state, turned this upset into a tremendous blow to the Governor's *amour propre*. Even so, Long might have contented himself with his usual waspish remarks against Gravel if other events had not intruded. However, during the course of the campaign Rainach had begun a probe of alleged voter registration violations in Winn parish,

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whose county seat is Winfield, Long's home town. This investigation had barely begun when Rainach called it off abruptly. In the meantime Gravel's scalp was once more called for, and the Governor interposed no longer. In fact he made it abundantly clear that he would go along with the ouster attempt, whereupon Gravel pointed out that this was either a political deal or one of the strangest coincidences in the state's political history. Little time was wasted before the committee meeting was held on October 8 and Gravel removed by a 69-30 vote. The national committee's action in upholding Gravel's right to continue in his post was an easily predictable sequel to those events in the state.

These activities may produce consequences of considerable import to Louisiana and the nation. The segregationists have greatly strengthened their hand in matters of national politics, because the refusal of the national committee to remove Gravel offers them a handy propaganda lever with which to pry advantages from the state committee, particularly with respect to the naming of delegates to the 1960 national convention. In the face of this local development and the increased resistance to Southern pressures by the national Democratic party organization (a resistance resulting in part from the confidence engendered by the 1958 congressional victories), the gap between the national and state organizations has enlarged almost to the point at which it is unbridgeable. By failing to protect Gravel against the state committee's action, Governor Long relinquished his position as broker between national and state organizations—a brokerage which had enabled him to serve both groups in the interest of moderation, continued party unity and the maintenance of effective communication.

Subsequent (and more widely publicized) events in Earl Long's administration have jeopardized the entire structure of the Long organization, thereby further weakening its capacity to stave off extremist racial policies. Louisiana's regular sixty-day legislative sessions are held in even-numbered years, but in odd years there is a thirty-day session which is limited to fiscal

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matters. During the 1959 fiscal session the Governor's activities reached such a frenzied state that he collapsed on the floor of the legislature after a series of haranguing speeches which grew increasingly incoherent. Succeeding events are so recent and so well known that little need be said about them. Through the action of his wife Long was committed to a private psychiatric clinic in Texas, from which he subsequently obtained release. Upon his return to Louisiana he was immediately committed by judicial process to a state mental institution, again at the instigation of Mrs. Long. In the latter instance the Governor freed himself through a series of maneuvers which involved the dismissal of the director of the state department of hospitals and the head of the hospital in which Long had been confined. The unfavorable publicity attendant upon Long's escapades apparently reduced his prestige to the lowest level yet reached in a career which has been characterized by a succession of ups and downs. The one fact in this case that has not been adequately noted by the national press, however, is that the Governor's collapse was the climax of an unsuccessful attempt to enact a bill designed to head off a purge of the voter registration rolls by Rainach's committee on segregation.

Some time prior to this time of troubles the Governor had announced his intention of circumventing the Louisiana constitutional prohibition against gubernatorial self-succession by resigning before the qualifying date for the December, 1959, state Democratic primary in order to run for the 1960-1964 term. Long's ambition to run again has not been deterred by the setbacks he has suffered or by his physical and mental condition. However, even the most hopeful prognosticator could hardly avoid pessimism about Long's chances in the election, and at this time there appears to be no successor capable of rallying the demoralized forces of Longism.*

* Governor Long did not resign and file as a candidate for Governor in the December, 1959 primary. However, he did file for the office of Lieutenant Governor on a ticket in which James A. Noe, an old-time Long supporter, is the gubernatorial candidate. This enables Governor Long to retain his present office until April, 1960.

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The total effect of these developments on state politics is difficult to estimate. There is little doubt but that in the Gravel incident the Governor made a concession that seriously limits the possibility of pursuing his former tactics of playing down the segregation issue. And his recent behavior has produced a further deterioration of Long's defensive position in this matter. The extent to which the segregationists may translate their support on this issue to the advantage of political forces who oppose the Long faction on other public questions is dependent largely on the viability of the race issue. Earl Long has said repeatedly that the man who runs on this issue alone will get nowhere at the polls because *every* candidate in the state election will pay homage to the principle of segregation. Political observers in the state have seen the Governor land on his feet after many a serious fall and they do not discount the possibility that he may yet recoup sufficiently to restore the old balance in which the segregationists were merely a recurrent irritation. But this point of view fails to take into account the self-propulsion of the segregationist cause. Nationally this group has no place to go, and the militant segregationists recognize this fact along with everyone else. Their frustration has led to a succession of confusing acts whose only potential is for destruction of party cohesion. And the use of this issue seems generally to be leading to a self-motivated political dynamics which its own perpetrators cannot control or moderate in the interest of competing issues. Many leaders of the South are already so completely the captive of this issue that any compromise on the part of the opposition must be regarded as capitulation—the sort of capitulation which indicates weakness and demands a new and larger act of defiance in the form of destruction of an existing social or political institution. Improbable as it seems, the action of the state committee in the Gravel case may very well be the counterpart of Governor Faubus's original action in calling out the National Guard—the first step in the direction of a political vortex from which there is no withdrawal.

UNKNOWN SOLDIERS

Three days darkening with autumn rain
Weep beyond sorrow for a climbing spring,
Winter curdling blood, all summers gone:
The slow tap and tattoo wear at the brain.

Go to the sodden woods and think of men
Missioned and brave who at the wreck of dawn
Saddled a brute and rode, their harness damp
And heavy. Think of the soldier and his gun,

The stain of first light and the dull command;
See how he stumbles in the early slime,
Enemy country and a rotten ground:
Think of all lookouts swung and far from home.

No, not to help. For every man his own:
Gawain rides the marches, at Bull Run
And Vimy the wet earth, as though old pain
Solaced the man who mourns his mother's son.

Louis O. Coxe

Robert G. Tucker

The Possibilities

WE USED TO SPEND some nights at Grandma's. She lived alone in one side of our favorite house. It had the great advantage of facing a street whose red brick paving made the wheels of Mr. Muller's junk-cart clatter, and the clapping hooves of his dapple-grey horse made the bricks ring each time he went by. There were always coal-carts, milk-wagons, trolley-cars, automobiles, and sometimes fire engines to watch from the front window in the livingroom or from over the tall gate on that side of the house, because the street went directly to the stores downtown in one direction, and in the other, to the farms and villages south of town. But best of all, the house was two blocks away from the railroad to Boston and Portland, and we often persuaded Grandma to take us over to the tracks.

Usually she would take us first to Mr. Matson's store across the street. The heavy door would hit the little bell when we went in, and Mr. Matson would come out through a fringed curtain from the back. Grandma talked with him while my sister and I looked in the curved-glass case at piles of yellow, unsharpened pencils, pads of blue-lined paper, and dishes full of penny candy. We usually got jellybeans because there were more of them, or licorice because it lasted longer. Then the door would ring the bell again as we went out, and we'd go down to the corner and turn west toward the tracks. Sometimes we went farther south on Grandma's side of the street and stopped to get an ice-cream cone at Mr. Bowman's before turning west to the tracks.

The Possibilities

But however we went, Grandma always went with us. If no train was coming, she'd walk with us along the tracks, helping us balance on the rail, showing us about cars on the sidings, telling us stories about when she was a girl. And when the train would come in sight, she'd hurry us over to the edge of the embankment. And there, where the grass began to thin into cinders, we'd wait in a row. As the train came past, Grandma between us would help wave to the engineer or fireman, brakeman or conductor—anyone who understood the overwhelming triumph which the roaring climax expressed.

Grandma was wonderful. But sometimes in the late evening when she'd come into our bedroom to talk about the day and say goodnight, she'd tell us the story of the boy who caught his foot in the tracks at a switch, of how trains can't always stop in time. Oh, you must *never* go there without Grandma, she said once, tucking us in almost fiercely and kissing us goodnight. We were impressed, of course, but—as she knew—the risk was part of the excitement. She knew that you walked on a rail by balancing all the possibilities as long as you could, and she had praised both Jane and me for our skill. But she felt that there were too many possibilities for us to handle unless she was with us. And we waited a long time before we felt ready to take them on alone.

I remember how it was, the night we decided to go without Grandma. The moon touched the dresser at the foot of the bed and lit the mirror's thin-spun trceries where the reflector had crazed behind the glass. I still remember how cool and damp to my fingers the raised patterns on the thin cotton quilt felt. Our plan was to go so early that we'd get back before Grandma woke up. Jane said she'd wake before I would, and she did.

We dressed quickly and heard the deliberate tocks of the clock in the lower hallway as we went down the carpeted stairs. The front door-latch made a noise and the door creaked, but nothing happened. We hurried down to the corner in the chill near-dark of early morning, turned, and made straight for the tracks. The shoe factory in the second block had a light burning

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in the office over the black safe with the red and gold eagle painted on its door. We saw a man in overalls and engineer's cap, carrying a lunchbox down a side street. But he didn't see us, and we climbed up the embankment onto the incoming track from Boston. We'd made it safely. The red and green signal lights stretched down the track in both directions, and it was beautiful.

We walked townwards awhile, north toward the station, making sure to step on each tie, partly because of the rule, mostly because the cinders between the ties felt too hard through scuffed sneaker soles. The cinders smelt sooty in the dew, and the sun's first glow was striking low, distant clouds—probably miles out over the ocean, we thought. You could see the shape of the roundhouse against the dark western sky, but the turntable in front of the roundhouse was vague and obscure. A few engines were steaming. The white smoke lifted in two widening pillars over the roof of the roundhouse. Down past the station a switch-engine fitfully pushed boxcars up a siding. We heard a crossing-whistle far up north.

We thought that, first, we'd climb a refrigerator car on a siding to our right, and then ride on a handcar that stood farther north on another side-track. So we climbed to the roof of the refrigerator car and ran back and forth on the boardwalk and saw a white gull glide high over the millpond beyond the roundhouse and saw the stars in the dark west. After awhile I turned the wheel at the end of the roof and found by a slight motion of the car that it was the brake wheel. So I turned it further. We began to roll slowly toward the station, and Jane said No. But I couldn't turn the wheel back. We were both scared, and we were rolling faster. Finally Jane came over, and together we stopped it. It had been exciting, but I didn't release the brake again.

Up there was probably too high to jump from, anyhow. The handcar was tamer, but it moved pretty fast and was fun. Jane was almost as strong as I, and we pumped it quite a distance before we stopped where the track bent close to the main line.

The Possibilities

We had to walk back north again, because we couldn't turn the handcar around. It was too heavy, and it went only one way for us.

A freight engine that had come in from Portland had stopped on the turntable, so we went over to watch it turn. We didn't like the engineer, but the fireman smiled and waved when he came around. The old man with the stained beard who sat in the turntable enginehouse, a great broken box with levers in it, kept spitting tobacco-juice out the window into the well. We watched the turntable wheels roll slowly around the edge of the well, then stop. Then we followed the engine as it backed into the roundhouse.

Even at rest, a steam locomotive could awe us. Its size, shape, colors; its great wheels; the way all its parts—black, nickel, brass, big, little, heavy, light—combined to promise vast power in swift motion; even these quiet pantings after the great, loud exertions—stimulated respect. The locomotive drew to itself all our delight in clamorous danger and adventure, fire-engines and ships in storm. What if, under this high, sooty arc of roof, bell and whistle sounded and the steam prisoner escaped, loudly and scaldingly reached out for us? What if, suddenly with all the noise it could make, with all the noise all these stabled locomotives could make, one came rushing at us, all its great wheeling weight and power flung over us? Ecstasy, to play with the thought. We came to the tracks to watch our potential annihilation and to play with it. And, of course, we weren't really in danger. We could balance on rails and high boardwalks, we could stop refrigerator cars and handcars, we could always jump and run, and it was beautiful.

But the sun was up now, the last star had faded, and we had to get back before Grandma got up. Time for only one more pleasure. A train had made up and was about to leave the station, taking Mr. Alborn and the other commuters to Boston. We waited for it, walking slowly from the roundhouse toward the street that led to Grandma's. Soon it began to move. From this side we couldn't see Mr. Whatten swinging aboard, because

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he was so far back along the train, but we knew that he had signaled with his lantern to the fireman, who had told the engineer to start. It came toward us, gathering speed. The bell stopped ringing, and the noise of the train's approach grew louder and louder. It was going to be beautiful, as always a train's passing was beautiful. Maybe the engineer would wave to us. We'd never seen this outbound train from this side of the tracks, though twice we'd watched it leave from the station platform. And once we'd been on it. We got as close to the track as we dared.

As the climax approached, we tightened up inside, anticipating, wonderfully moved. Surely he'd wave to us. Surely he knew and cared about it. We watched very carefully, for it meant everything. It was the last time I ever felt like that, and it was the best time. It had never happened that way before. Not only the engineer saw us, but also the fireman. He was on the engineer's side of the cab as it thundered past us. They both waved and smiled, and the engineer pulled the whistle-cord twice, two sharp, thrilling blasts. Never such delight, as the train passed roaring powerfully between us and Grandma's. Clatter-roar, clatter-roar it went, as the intervals between cars broke the sound regularly. We thought we saw Mr. Alborn, but we couldn't be sure, because the man had his head down, reading a newspaper. It was almost gone, and we saw Mr. Whatten, but he was punching a ticket and talking and didn't see us. Then it was finished.

Jane said, Beat you back! and ran ahead before I had a chance to recover. Neither of us had seen the Portland freight coming in from Boston. We had been looking the other way at the outbound and, while that was passing, it had hidden the inbound track. But the freight was coming fast only two engine-lengths away. And Jane just stood there in its track, looking, while it hooted and came on. It towered close, brutally loud, locked wheels grinding the track. Jane took forever to realize that it would kill her. Just before it reached her, she dove into the cinders on the other side, safe. I watched the wheels me-

The Possibilities

chanically unlock, and the roaring kept whatever the fireman high up there with straining red neck and all those teeth yelled at me.

But all the time before Jane jumped, and then while the long freight rolled between us, I felt all the possibilities there could be. And when the caboose finally rattled past, Jane stood shivering and her eyes were very wide open. I remember, going back to Grandma's, how different our voices sounded, and how tight we held hands.

E. E. Cummings

POEM

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Sidney Monas

The Lion in the Cage: the Quixote of Reality

ONE COULD GO MAD as the knight himself looking for the "real" Don Quixote. The shelves of our libraries groan with commentaries, explanations, interpretations.* Is he, like Hamlet, an artificer of stratagems to put his time back in joint? Or is he—as Turgenev saw him—the opposite of Hamlet: a man fixed in all simplicity on the realization of an ideal that burns steadily in his mind? Is the book an allegory of the condition of Spain? Or is it merely a playful hoaxing about with conventions? Does Cervantes take the ideals of chivalry seriously or is he trying to ridicule them out of existence? Or perhaps he is simply being a literary critic and trying to demonstrate how books should be written? Or does he mock writing, too, by making the narrator and presumed author of the book a heathen Moor—the Cid Hamete Benengali—and what can one expect of a heathen who insists on swearing by his Christian honor? To all these questions, I like to imagine Cervantes dourly answering, "Yes," or waving them away with the hand from which two fingers were shot off at the Battle of Lepanto. From too many interpretations and over-interpretations,

* Three recent ones lurk in the background from which this essay emerged: the chapter on Don Quixote in Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis*; the chapter on Cervantes in Leo Lowenthal's *Literature and the Image of Man*; and Mark Van Doren's charming little book, *Don Quixote's Profession*. Sensitive and imaginative as they are, they fail to convince. The book is *not* "sheer play" as Auerbach would have it; it is *not* primarily about the strains and virtues of social mobility as Lowenthal suggests; and in spite of Van Doren, Don Quixote really *is* mad.

The Lion in the Cage

tions, Don Quixote has become a kind of cliché, and we would not be very surprised to see him appearing on a television commercial, or charging windmills on an ordinary billboard, selling bubble gum along the highway. We tend to resent him as we resent a cliché and above all we resist its application to ourselves. So we ask: *is* there a real Don Quixote? And the answer? The answer is still yes. But he is to be found only in a book by Cervantes called *The True History of the Ingenious Gentleman, Don Quixote de la Mancha*. And it must be read carefully.

The rhythm of the book is slow, like an old-fashioned journey along bad roads, on horse-back, on mule-back or on foot. At crossroads, along main highways, at inns and stopping places along the way, things happen. To Don Quixote everything that happens is an adventure. In between there is plenty of time for talk, the marvellous drawn-out criss-crossing dialogues between the knight and his squire—Don Quixote very lofty and high-flown, Sancho Panza, down-to-earth and a bit garrulous—in which what has happened is shaped into a double perspective, or as other people chance to wander in, a triple or a quadruple perspective. The landscape over which they pass is, on the whole, a somber one. Dusty fields, barren crags, forests more gloomy than not; and above all the human landscape—windmills, fulling-mills, sawmills, there for a purpose Don Quixote refuses to recognize; lonely inns he insists on calling castles; merchants and priests and convict-guards all going about their business, a lonely business that separates them from the landscape; weird funeral processions; an occasional madman; shepherds who try to make a more or less pleasant game out of nature; and real shepherds driving herds of beasts—sheep, cattle, swine—which trample Don Quixote, each time drubbing him with increasing humiliation, because he refuses to recognize them for what they are. There is something terribly intractable about this landscape. It offers so little in its own right, and it refuses to cooperate with any of the illusions people insist on having about it.

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It could not always have been so, Don Quixote insists. Not in the age the ancients called golden

because the people of those days did not know those two words *thine* and *mine*. . . . Clear springs and running rivers offered their sweet and limpid waters in glorious abundance. In clefts of the rock and hollow trees the careful and provident bees formed their commonwealth, offering to every hand without interest the fertile produce of their fragrant toil. . . . The law did not then depend on the judge's nice interpretations, for there were none to judge or to be judged. Maiden modesty roamed wherever she would, single and solitary, without fear or harm from strangers' license or lascivious assault; and if she was undone, it was of her own free will and desire. . . .*

It is this vision of an age when man was not solitary, but at one with nature, that Don Quixote wants to bring back to the world—an age when no one was forced against his will and man was not estranged from man by the pursuit of property.

As time rolled on and wickedness increased, the order of knights-errant was founded for their protection, to defend maidens, relieve widows, and succour the orphans and the needy.

Was there ever a Golden Age, were there ever knights-errant, such as Don Quixote describes? No, but they are in the books he has read and the books are eloquent and *seem real*. The books confront him with his own possibilities. Don Quixote sees knight-errantry as the only enterprise worthy of the courage, the pride, the knowledge, the eloquence and the fortitude that he feels he has inside himself. He wants to do nothing less than recreate the world, and, of course, it is impossible. To want the impossible as intensely as Don Quixote wants it, is madness. His madness isolates him from his fellow human-beings, even from Sancho, who, for his own reasons, needs to believe in his master's sanity:

I cannot endure or bear with patience some of the things your worship says. They make me think that all you tell me about chivalries and win-

* Translation by J. M. Cohen, Penguin Classics, 1950.

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ning kingdoms and empires, and giving isles and doing other favors and mighty deeds, as knights errant do, must be just wind and lies, and all friction or fiction or whatever you call it.

Don Quixote is alone in the world—but so is everyone else. He is alone because he wants the impossible; the rest are alone because each pursues his own selfish ends.

There are, of course, many different ways of wanting the impossible, and everyone wants it just a little bit. When Don Quixote has finished his description of the Golden Age, the goatherds tell him the story of the cruel shepherdess Marcela, who would not accept the love of her admirers because she wanted the admiration and her freedom, too—something she could have, as a matter of fact, only in the Golden Age. And she, too, has attempted to recreate a Golden Age by using the pastoral convention. Later, in the "Tale of Foolish Curiosity," an old manuscript discovered in the inn, we learn of a young man, happily married to a virtuous wife, who forfeits his happiness by putting her to the test of an impossible, absolute virtue that no human being can possess. There is madness here, too.

Not all the set-pieces, the narrative interludes of the First Part, or the spoken tales and biographical asides of the Second Part, involve the pursuit of the impossible. But all serve as commentary on the main theme of Don Quixote's quest, and all serve to illustrate, each in a different way, the common human need which it expresses. Each is told in a somewhat different literary convention, a perspective, a *style* which mediates between human desires and aspirations and the irresponsible and irresponsible formlessness of the real world. There is the language of chivalry, the language of pastoral, and even Sancho Panza has his proverbs, the language of folk-wisdom. These styles, these languages are ways of playing with reality, of mediating between the freedom and power of a personal ideal and the intractable nature of the real world.

No one takes his play more seriously than Don Quixote. After all, the game he has made involves nothing less than the

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complete transformation of the world. He calls it a profession—knight-errantry. And he never misses an opportunity to expound on the subject, or, indeed, to demonstrate it. A religious calling it is, not different from that of monk, except in its demand for action and active commitment in the face of the devouring jaws of reality.

I mean that the religious [Don Quixote says] in all peace and quiet pray heaven for the well-being of the world; but we soldiers and knights carry out what they pray for, defending it with the strength of our arms and the edge of our swords, beneath no roof but the open sky, exposed to sun in summer and frost in winter. We, therefore, are God's ministers on earth, and the arms by which His justice is executed here.

If the knight is religious, he is also learned, and his aims are the same as the loftiest aims of scholarship—

to maintain impartial justice, to give every man his rights, to make good laws, and to see that they are kept.

But again, he differs in the terms of his commitment; he is *engaged* with the forces that corrode and corrupt, and in his battles if his victory is not total, he loses all. Scholars, though they may suffer want and deprivation, are often rewarded: "We have seen them command and govern the world from an armchair. . . ." But soldiers and knights are up to their ears in chance, especially in this iron age of artillery which has in any practical situation made virtual equals of courage and fear:

. . . some random shot discharged perhaps by a man who fled in terror from the flash. . . . And when I think of that, I am tempted to say that it grieves me to the heart to have adopted this profession of knight-errantry in such a detestable age as we now live in. . . . But if I achieve my purpose I shall be the more highly esteemed for having faced greater danger than did the knights errant of past ages.

The knight-errant is not only a monk, a scholar, a soldier, a poet, master of all the professions—he differs from them in one essential respect. They achieve, or seem to achieve their purpose, by shutting themselves off from the vast and incomprehensible loneliness of the world as a whole; their style is

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specialized, designed to shelter and distinguish them from the whole. The style blocks out what it cannot accommodate, rejects what will destroy it. But Don Quixote must accommodate everything. The point of knighthood is action and *exposure*. That is how you tell the difference between the true knight-errant and the false:

We, the true knights-errants, measure the whole earth with our own feet, in sun, in cold, and beneath the sky, exposed to the inclemencies of the heavens by night and day, on foot and on horse. We know our enemies not merely by their portraits. . . .

Even the soldiers at the inn, the officers of the Holy Brotherhood, the convicts' escort, are different from Don Quixote; they have their orders. Don Quixote has, of course, the rules of chivalry as he has mastered them in his reading; but he follows them alone.

The landscape of the medieval tales of chivalry is a psychic landscape. There is no conscious distinction between inner and outer experience. In this connection, I am reminded of my four-year-old son, who, when I asked him where his dreams came from, replied that they came from the closet. Knight-errantry can exist only in this psychic landscape, not in the world of fulling-mills, taxes, and the Holy Brotherhood. Don Quixote, therefore, must act *as though he were* in the midst of such a world. Whether he really sees it that way or not is more complicated than at first sight it may seem. In any case, one of the great dangers of such strenuous play is that the actor may lose his identity, and with his identity his purpose. This never happens to Don Quixote. "I know very well who I am," he insists. He does not confuse who he is with what he is capable of being. Nevertheless, on his first expedition, he senses the danger and returns home. What he needs is an audience that is at the same time critical and sympathetic. Such an audience reminds the actor of the need for control. That is where Sancho Panza comes in. No one has a firmer grip over his observations of the external world than Sancho, but at the same time he wants to govern an island, he too wants to become what he feels himself

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capable of being, and in Don Quixote he senses instinctively not only the means, but a kindred spirit. "They are two of a kind, master and squire," as those who meet them never tire of telling us. And they are held together by their differences as well as by their similarity.

"What giants?" asks Sancho Panza as Don Quixote goes charging down on the windmill. "Born into this iron age to revive the age of gold," he repeats mockingly when they discover the fulling-mills. Don Quixote is always studied and eloquent in his discourse; Sancho spouts proverbs, a little wrong, but always in great abundance:

In me, the need to talk is a primary impulse, and I can't help saying right off what comes to my tongue.

Don Quixote, through a cloud of dust, describes an approaching army in vivid detail: the giants, the knights, their crests, the emblems of their shields. "Sir, devil a man or a giant or a knight your worship mentions is to be seen, for all that." "Cannot you hear the horses neighing and the trumpets blaring and the beating of the drums?" "The only thing that I can hear," replies Sancho, "is a great bleating of sheep."

The tension between the two is a creative one. They educate each other. Before the book is over the illiterate Sancho Panza utters more than one high-flown speech worthy of his master, and Don Quixote has let drop more than one proverb. The first revelation of what they mean to each other occurs during the episode of the funeral procession. The torches make it a weird and terrifying spectacle, and Sancho's horse-sense (or I should say, more properly, mule-sense) cannot account for it this time except in the terms Don Quixote presents to him—these are demons from hell. All the more reason to run the other way, says Sancho. But Don Quixote goes charging in, only to discover that there are no devils but a procession escorting a corpse dead of the plague. Not only that, but he has injured an innocent bystander, who reproaches him ironically in the stilted puns of his own books of chivalry:

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I don't know what this righting of wrongs may be about, for I was all right, and by leaving me with a broken leg which will not be right for all the days of my life you have made me all wrong. The injury you have relieved in me has left me so that I shall remain injured for life; and it has been misadventure enough to have met you on your quest for adventure.

"You can never tell how these things will turn out," mumbles the Don. The real point, he insists, is that "I should have attacked you even if I had known for certain that you were the very devils from hell which I judged and took you to be." At this point, Sancho really catches on—to his master's courage, to the game he is playing, and to the perplexities it involves him in—and he gives Don Quixote the title: The Knight of the Woeful Countenance. Don Quixote instantly accepts it and wants to emboss it on his shield. That isn't necessary, Sancho assures him, "All your worship has to do is expose his face."

Not only does the Bachelor get his leg broken, but the galley-slaves and the whipped boy all return to haunt Don Quixote with the impossibility of the Golden Age. Meanwhile, he goes on exposing himself and his squire to the beatings, the drubbings, the wind and the rain of the real world. Sancho is generous and fairly thick-skinned; he has, as he puts it, "four inches of old Christian fat on my soul." But he does not take kindly to hardship; he puts up with it; and in the long run, measuring the bitter against the sweet, he decides that he has come to like knight-errantry after all. "I've come off blanket-tossed from some adventure," he tells his wife, "and bruised from others. But for all that, it's a nice thing to be looking out for incidents, crossing mountains, searching woods, climbing rocks, visiting castles, and lodging in inns at your pleasure, with devil a farthing to pay." And he develops a genuine love for his master: "I mean, there's nothing of the rogue in him," he tells the Squire of the Wood. "His soul is as clean as a pitcher. He can do no harm to anyone, only good to everybody. There's no malice in him. A child might make him believe it's night at noonday. And for that simplicity I love him as dearly as my

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own heartstrings, and can't take to the idea of leaving him for all his wild tricks."

He is overawed by Don Quixote's knowledge as well as by his eloquence: "There isn't a subject he doesn't pick at and dip his spoon into." If Sancho nags after his wages, and never misses an opportunity to pick up gold pieces along the way, it is not because he is greedy, but because he is, after all, unlike Don Quixote, a family man, with a wife and children to think of. Clearly, he does not serve Don Quixote for money. But even the island that the knight keeps dangling before him is not the main reason. Because he gets a chance, finally, to govern his island—and his talent for governing turns out to be as impressive as Don Quixote's courage—but he discovers that it doesn't matter. His attachment to Don Quixote is deeper than that.

I should have left my master long ago if I had been wise. But that was my lot and my ill-luck; I can do nothing else; I have to follow him; we're of the same village; I've eaten his bread; I love him dearly; I'm grateful to him . . . and what is more, I'm faithful; and so it's impossible for anything to part us except the man with the pick and shovel.

Don Quixote's courage, on the other hand, needs Sancho's fear; his psychic landscape needs to be held in focus by Sancho's controlling vision of the real world. He accuses Sancho of knowing nothing about adventures, but he undertakes to teach him. In the long run, he comes to respect his squire, and he recommends him to the Duke and Duchess for governorship:

He doubts everything and believes everything. When I think he is going to tumble into folly he comes out with clever sayings that exalt him to the sky. In fact I would not exchange him for any other squire, even if I were to receive a city to boot. . . .

There is only one stretch in the book, from the time they set out together, where Don Quixote is without Sancho for more than twenty-four hours. Sancho is off governing his island. Don Quixote remains in the Duke's palace, subjected to cruel hoaxing; in the past, he has played this game gallantly, standing up to the worst that could happen to him. But now, without

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Sancho, he suddenly feels his loneliness and isolation; he sits in his room, dangles a torn sock, and sighs, "Poverty, poverty. . ."

There is always the danger that the distance between the world of literary illusion and the world of folk-wisdom will become too great, and the creative tension between them will snap and their representatives go different ways. Sancho Panza must prevent himself from believing that his master is insane, and Don Quixote that his squire is a fool. Don Quixote discovers a marvellous explanation, drawn from his books of chivalry, that will reconcile their radically different interpretations of what befalls them, that both can accept, each in his own terms: Enchantment.

The theme of enchantment is first introduced by Don Quixote's housekeeper in reference to his books. She urges the priest to sprinkle them with holy water before burning, "because of the sorcery that's in them." There might be, she says, "some enchanter about, out of all the lot there are in these books, and he might put a spell on us, to punish us for the bad turn we're going to deal him. . . ." She has her master's library walled in, and so that he might not accuse her of foul play, explains to him that some enchanter must have spirited it away. Don Quixote dwells on this explanation; it grows on him, and he uses it with marvellous effect on Sancho. After he has been trampled by the sheep, he exclaims to Sancho: "What a way that scoundrel of an enchanter, my enemy, has of transforming things and making them invisible!" Sancho always retains, of course, a certain basic skepticism, but on the whole it is an explanation he can live with. He knows, for example, that things do not always have the same effect on him and his master. The balsam that cures Don Quixote only makes Sancho sicker; there seems to be some fundamental difference between a knight and a squire. And when Sancho becomes too impatient, and insists a basin is a basin, Don Quixote hints at a deeper explanation behind the meaning of enchantment:

Look you, Sancho . . . is it possible that all this while you have been with me, you have not discovered that everything to do with knights-errant

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appears to be chimera, folly and nonsense, and to go all contrariwise? This is not really the case, but there is a crew of enchanters always amongst us who change and alter all our deeds, and transform them according to their pleasure and their desire either to favor us or injure us. So what seems to you to be a barber's basin appears to me Mambrino's helmet, and to another as something else.

Nevertheless, there are some events that Sancho staunchly refuses to accept as enchantment. Enchanters may inflict bruises on his master, but his own aches are too real. The blanket he was tossed in must have been a real blanket, no matter what Don Quixote says. And when the knight is in turn hoaxed by the priest and barber into believing that enchantment requires him to remain in a wooden cage, Sancho refuses to believe it. A man who eats and drinks and performs his bodily functions cannot be enchanted.

As to Mambrino's helmet, "who knows what it really is?" And when a vote is taken at the inn, Sancho is astonished to find the majority come out against its being a barber's basin. Meanwhile, as Sancho grows accustomed to the notion of enchantment he shows himself not at all averse to playing with it, and in the matter of Don Quixote's lady, Dulcinea del Toboso, he enters into a delightful little game with his master, which plays no small role in his education.

Dulcinea del Toboso is in reality Aldonza Lorenzo, a farmer's daughter, and that precise and meticulous historian, the Cid Hamete Benengali tells us in a margin of his manuscript that "she was the best hand at salting pork in all La Mancha." Don Quixote saw her in passing one day and out of her brawny image he constructed a princess, for "A knight errant without a lady is like a tree without leaves . . . a shadow without a body to cast it." If Don Quixote were an ordinary pious Catholic Christian, of post-medieval Spain like those who try to argue him out of his madness, he never would have broken with his housekeeper's advice to "stay at home, look after your property, confess frequently, be good to the poor," and he would have seen the element of truth in the accusation

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of paganism that is brought against his books of chivalry. But God and Heaven are a long way off, and the world is "full of tricks and devices." Don Quixote never doubts until the very end that he has been serving God, but the fact remains that the world is not as it should be. To hold him steadfast in the hardships of setting it right, he needs some more readily formulable human ideal, so he makes of Aldonza Lorenzo the best that a woman can be. She represents the potential creative power of his enterprise. With her image fixed in his mind, he is all right, no matter what beatings he has to take, no matter what is flung in his face. After having been buffeted half to death in the adventure of the penitents, Don Quixote's first words on regaining consciousness are: "He who lives absent from you, sweetest Dulcinea, is subject to greater calamities than these."

When Sancho first learns who Dulcinea del Toboso is, his response is half-pleased, because he knows the world in which she lives and in that world is quite ready to admire her (as he says, "I very much enjoy this love business"), but also half-mocking because he knows a peasant girl is not a princess.

Praise be to God! [he tells his master] She's a brawny girl, well built and tall and sturdy, and she will know how to keep her chin out of the mud with any knight-errant who ever has her for mistress. O the wench, what muscles she's got, and what a pair of lungs! I remember one day she went up the village belfry to call in some of their lads who were working in a fallow field of her father's, and they could hear her as plainly as if they'd been at the foot of the tower, although they were nearly two miles away. And the great thing about her is that she's not a bit shy. There's a good deal of the court-lady about her too, for she has a crack with everybody, and makes a joke and a mock of them all. I tell you, Sir Knight of the Sad Countenance, that you're not only quite right to play your mad pranks for her, but you've good reason to despair and hang yourself for her as well.

To this Don Quixote replies, acknowledging Sancho's thrust, "Though your wits are blunt, your remarks sometimes sting." But then he tells Sancho the story of a great lady who had a love affair with a student; the rector of his school, hearing of

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the affair, tried to point out to the lady that the lad was unworthy, not a very good student. "He may seem an idiot," replied the lady, "but for what I want of him, he knows as much philosophy as Aristotle." And he adds with regard to Dulcinea: "I imagine all I say to be true, neither more nor less, and in my imagination I draw her as I would have her, both as to her beauty and as to her rank." "What I say is that your worship's always right," replies Sancho, "and I'm an ass." He then listens to the letter Don Quixote has composed for Dulcinea, and is astonished at its eloquence: "God bless my father! It's the finest thing I've ever heard!" But he discovers also that it is not at all necessary to put himself to the trouble of delivering the letter—but only to act *as though* he had.

The Duke and the Duchess are treated to the same revelation of Dulcinea as Sancho, but they are more obtuse.

God knows whether Dulcinea exists on earth or no [Don Quixote tells them] or whether she is a fantasy or not a fantasy. These are not matters whose verification can be carried out to the full. I neither engendered nor bore my lady, though I *contemplate her as she needs must be*, as a lady with all the qualities needed to win her fame in all the quarters of the world. These are: spotless beauty, dignity without pride, love with modesty, politeness springing from courtesy, courtesy from good breeding and, lastly, high lineage, for with good blood beauty shines and glows with a degree of perfection impossible in a humbly born beauty.

The Duke insists on being pedantic about her lineage. Don Quixote answers with eloquent simplicity, "She is the daughter of her works." In other words, she is what she can be.

Sancho becomes so familiar with the image of Dulcinea that he decides to "enchant" her. His master has sent him on an errand to fetch her back. With little hope of finding her, and fearful lest his master discover the previous hoax of the undelivered letter, he fastens on the first homely peasant wench he sees and tries to pass her off on Don Quixote as Dulcinea under the spell of that wicked enchanter "who is always pursuing your worship." The knight seems to accept his squire's explana-

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tion. Later, however, when he descends into the Cave of Montesinos—a marvellous episode, partly Plato's cave in reverse, partly a satire on heroic descent into the underworld—and Sancho is obviously very worried about him, Don Quixote obviously pulls Sancho's leg. When the knight is finally drawn from the depths of the cave, he pretends to be in a trance, and when he awakens he tells Sancho that he has seen the enchanted Dulcinea just as she appeared along the road, that she looked at him without saying a word and turned sadly away, and that a great sage explained to him then the secret of her enchantment. "Holy Father!" exclaims Sancho. "Think of your good name and don't believe in these bubbles that have spoilt and crazed your wits." Don Quixote replies smugly, "It is because you love me, Sancho, that you talk like this."

Fundamentally, enchantment has to do with books, and we learn a new dimension of its meaning when Don Quixote is told that his own adventures have appeared in print.

He imagined that some sage, either friendly or hostile, had given them to the Press by magic art . . . and it must perforce be grandiloquent, lofty, remarkable, magnificent and true.

Oh, yes, they tell him: "Children finger it; young people read it; grown men know it by heart, and old men praise it." When they look out into the street—the real street—and see a real horse, lean and emaciated, but plodding on, they shout: "There goes Rocinante!" As it takes hold of the mind, the enchantment of books assumes many forms: there are speeches, disguises, hoaxes, plays, plays within plays, madness, and madness within madness. There is even an apocryphal Don Quixote, whom the true Don Quixote almost meets. Underneath this play, the real world sits, implacable and indifferent, unchanged, capable of devouring it all, but bearing it for a while, without responding. Even the human world does not change much. When Don Quixote visits a printing press, he expects to find almost a concrete embodiment of what he told Sancho he saw in the Cave of Montesinos; and, indeed, the machinery is very

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wonderful, but when he inquires what book they are setting up in type it turns out to be the adventures of the apocryphal, not of the true, Don Quixote.

Nevertheless, enchantment has its effects, and Don Quixote's madness is catching. On his journey, almost everyone he encounters has read some of the books he has read, or has been influenced by them, and Don Quixote who claims that he has seen Amadis of Gaul practically with his own eyes, finally becomes a literary figure in his own right. The language he speaks is not a foreign one to them; they only think he's mad because he wants to do something with it—something now, in the real world, and they know, too well, that is impossible. He not only talks the language of knighthood but attempts to *realize* it. Still, to all those for whom we have any sympathy, he is not merely a madman, but a "brave" madman, or a "charming" madman. He plays a role they have all been impressed with in their reading, which they are all prepared to admire in the abstract (even if grudgingly), and which has by no means left them untouched. And he plays it, not like Marcela the Shepherdess, who wants to have her cake and eat it too, but with total commitment.

The innkeeper, who is quick enough to complain when Don Quixote pierces his wineskins insisting he saw them as giants, nevertheless maintains that the books of chivalry are true. (The fair Dorothea calls him "a minor Don Quixote," and she is right.) He thinks they are true, because they rouse him from the torpor and boredom and solitude of his life, and permit him to participate in an exciting action. But not all of him is roused; he participates only with his strongest impulses, which are sadistic: "When I hear about those furious, terrible blows the knights deal one another, I get the fancy to strike a few myself." No one can tell him those tales are not true: "As if I didn't know how many beans make five, and where my own shoe pinches!" Then why doesn't he become a knight, too? "Oh, I shall never be fool enough to turn knight-errant," he says, "for I can see quite well that it's not the fashion now to do as they did in the

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olden days when they say those famous knights roamed the world." The innkeeper's daughter, the pretty girl with the mysterious smile, also believes in the stories. "I listen, too," she says, "and really, though I don't understand it, I do enjoy it. But I don't like the fighting that pleases my father so much; I prefer the complaints the knights make when they're away from their ladies. Sometimes they actually make me cry, I pity them so much." The virtuous Dorothea interrupts: "You'd give them some relief then?" The remark is just a little too sharp. Dorothea is apt at disguises herself, and the tales of chivalry have obviously meant something to her, too.

The priest and the barber and in Part II their cohort, the Bachelor Samson Carrasco, are involved, or think they are involved, in the enterprise of bringing Don Quixote home and restoring his sanity. But as they participate in the business of enchantment with hoaxes, ruses, disguises and stratagems, they fail to grasp the extent to which Don Quixote has drawn them into his madness, the extent to which they have themselves become enchanted.

From the beginning, the possibilities have been there. They are all thorough readers of the tales of chivalry themselves. The priest and the barber decide, as a matter of policy, that they must burn Don Quixote's books, but they cannot bring themselves to do so indiscriminately. Amadis of Gaul is spared because it is "the finest of its kind written." "That book is a rare treasure of delight and a mine of entertainment." Pastoral "cannot do the same mischief as the books of chivalry," and then there is *The Tears of Angelico*, which almost gets burned because time is running out. "I would have wept myself," said the priest, "if I had ordered that book consigned to the flames." At the inn, the priest speaks, fully believing, of a knight "of such natural strength that with one finger he stopped a mill-wheel turning at full speed." He constantly deplores the bad books that have been written on knight-errantry, but he cannot bring himself to renounce the good ones.

Except that he deplores the knight's madness, the priest re-

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spects, indeed is a little in awe of, Don Quixote. "Nobody would think him anything but a man of very sound judgment, unless he were to strike him on the subject of chivalries." But for Don Quixote knight-errantry is the master science, and everything he knows he knows through chivalry; that is, the world has meaning for him, it fits into a meaningful pattern, only in the context of chivalry. What kind of a tribute is it that accepts the wisdom but rejects its source?

The soldiers, the innkeeper and his daughter, Dorothea in her disguise, the priest and the barber, the young lovers, all listen with rapt attention as Don Quixote discourses on arms and learning. He has said the inn was a castle—and, lo and behold, it *is* a castle. "Here," he welcomes the judge who has just entered, "you will find arms at their zenith and beauty in its prime." He has created a community—not the community of the Golden Age, to be sure—but one they all find it pleasant to live in, and the only pity is that it cannot last.

During this session at the inn, they all hear "The Tale of Foolish Curiosity" read aloud and its moral is clearly stated in the story: "What are you seeking to find out? . . . Remember that by seeking the impossible you may justly be denied the possible." This is an obvious comment on Don Quixote's quest, but not quite so obviously perhaps, it is also a comment on those who are attempting to bring Don Quixote back to the real world. As a gentleman of Barcelona says to the Bachelor Samson Carrasco, after that worthy has finally undone Don Quixote and ensured his return home: "Don't you see, sir, that no benefit to be derived from Don Quixote's recovery could outweigh the pleasures afforded by his extravagance?"

Cervantes' most perfect representation of Don Quixote's relationship to the real world occurs, it seems to me, in Part II in the sequence that involves the knight's meeting with the green man and the episode of the lions.

On the road, Don Quixote meets a man in a green coat, to whom he introduces himself as a knight-errant about whom a famous history has already been written. "The traveller sus-

The Lion in the Cage

pected that he must be an idiot, and waited for some further remarks to confirm his suspicion." The green man is strictly middle-class respectability, but one of the best of his kind. He lives well, but not extravagantly; his most exciting pastime is hunting; he reads, but not too much, and no books of chivalry. He is religious, but not excessively so, and everything in his life is reduced to the norm of probity and common-sense. Sancho, always impressed by horse-sense, reacts extravagantly and calls the green man a saint, which is his first surprise. "I am no saint," he replies, "but a great sinner. Now you, brother, you must be good; your simplicity proves it."

The green man has only one worry—his son, who has rejected all profitable and respectable careers and wants to be a poet. Here the green man gets his second surprise. Don Quixote, soberly and eloquently, gives him some very sound advice. Why not let him be a poet? You have money, you are respectable enough; he may have talent, let him follow his bent. "Children, sir, are part of the very bowels of their parents; and so we must love them, whether they are good or bad, as we love the souls that give us life." At this point, the green man is in for his greatest surprise, and Don Quixote fully intends to surprise him; one suspects that he has become a little irritated with this man of the golden mean.

A wagon is approaching. Don Quixote asks the driver what it contains. Lions from Africa, for the King. "They're very hungry at present, for they've had nothing to eat today." Don Quixote replies with a slight smile: "Lion cubs to me? To me lion cubs and at this time of day." Sancho assures the green man: "He's not crazy, just foolhardy." Don Quixote puts on his helmet, which Sancho, unknown to him, has just filled with cheese; the whey drips down his face and gets in his beard, but he wipes it off with perfect dignity, and orders the driver to open the cage and let the larger lion out. The driver tries to dissuade him, but Don Quixote threatens him with his lance. The green man tries to dissuade him, but he brushes him angrily aside: "Pray go away, my dear sir, and look to your quiet

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pointer and your good ferret, and leave every man to do his duty. This is mine, and I know whether they are coming against me or not, these noble lions." Sancho tries to dissuade him:

Look, sir, here's no enchantment or any such thing, for I've seen the claw of a real lion through the bars and cracks in the cages. And I'm sure that a lion with a claw like that must be bigger than a mountain.

But Don Quixote persists. "With marvelous bravery and a bold heart he took up his position in a leisurely way in front of the cart, commending himself to God with all his soul, and then to his lady, Dulcinea."

Now, the lion is one of the common beasts in the psychic landscape of knight-errantry. I have seen a replica of a lion-statue made for Henry of Welf, who was called the Lion, by a sculptor who had never seen one, but who, a chronicler tells us, "knew very well what a lion should look like." It does not look very fierce, but proud, courageous, and somehow even generous—a perfect embodiment in animal form of the virtues of a knight-errant. And in the tales of chivalry, when a true knight meets a lion, it is as his counterpart in the animal kingdom, and they sometimes become friends.

But this is not a symbolic lion that Don Quixote is facing. This is a real lion, from Africa. This lion is reality itself. If it is not as big as a mountain, it is big enough to make mincemeat of our knight with one swipe. But Don Quixote stands bravely before the open cage. And the lion?

The lion's first action was to turn around in its cage, extend its claws, and stretch full length. Then he opened his mouth and yawned very leisurely, and sticking out almost two foot of tongue, licked the dust out of his eyes and washed his face. This done he put his head out of the cage and looked in all directions with eyes blazing like live coals... then he turned his back and showed Don Quixote his hindquarters. Then he lay down in his cage with great calmness and composure and went to sleep.

From that time on, Don Quixote is no longer known as the Knight of the Sad Countenance, but as the Knight of the Lions.

The Lion in the Cage

When the green man returns from his safe distance, Don Quixote tells him that he would rather have it said that he was "rash and foolhardy," than that he was "timid and cowardly." And the green man is impressed.

In the long run, the priest and the barber and Samson Carrasco have their way and Don Quixote is under a pledge to return home and undertake no new adventures for a long time. On the way back, he receives a final drubbing from a herd of swine. The Duke and the Duchess, and the duplicity of his friends, haunt him. He toys with the notion of adopting the pastoral convention, but it is fruitless. There is no way out of his melancholy; the real world has him. And when he returns home and feels himself dying, he accepts the world—the world as God made it—as a good Christian must. But only just as he is about to leave it. Before he dies, he sees a curious reversal in his friends. Those who had spared no pains to bring him back from madness, now beg him to take up the old enchantment, for his sake and theirs.

Don't die, dear master! [says Sancho in tears] Take my advice and live many years. For the maddest thing a man can do in this life is to let himself die just like that, without anybody killing him, but just finished off by his own melancholy. Don't be lazy, look you, but get out of bed, and let's go out into the fields dressed as shepherds, as we decided to. Perhaps we shall find the lady Dulcinea behind some hedge, disenchanted and as pretty as a picture.

"Let us go gently, gentlemen," replies Don Quixote, and he answers Sancho with a proverb—"there are no birds this year in last year's nests. I was mad, but I am sane now. I was Don Quixote de la Mancha, but today, as I have said, I am Alonso Quixana the Good."

The last words, however, are with that old sage and enchanter, that precise, grandiloquent, circumstantial, lofty, remarkable and true historian, the Cid Hamete Benengali. "For me alone Don Quixote was born and I for him. His was the power of action, mine of writing. . . ." And with this he has left us the real and ideal Don Quixote, to "serve as an example of his virtues."

John Ciardi

Purgatorio, canto VI:
a new translation*

THE POETS move along with the souls still crowding about them. Dante promises all of them that he will bear word of them back to the world, but he never pauses in his climb. Among that press of souls, Dante specifically mentions seeing Benincasa di Laterino, Guccio de'Tarlatti, Federico Novello, Count Orso, and Pierre de la Brosse.

Finally free of that crowd Dante asks Virgil how it is that prayer may sway God's will. Virgil explains in part but once more finishes by declaring that the whole truth is beyond him and that Dante must refer the question to Beatrice when he meets her.

The sun passes behind the mountain as they climb (mid-afternoon of Easter Sunday.) The poets press on, and there on the shady slope they encounter the majestic spirit of Sordello who, like Virgil, is a Mantuan. Dante watches Sordello and Virgil embrace in a transport of love for their common birth-place and is moved to denounce Italy for setting brothers to war on one another, to denounce the Emperor Albert for his failure to bring unity and peace to Italy, and finally to utter an invective against Florence as the type of the war-torn and corrupt state.

* Mr. Ciardi's translation of the *Purgatorio* will be published soon, with extensive explanatory notes, by the Rutgers University Press. His translation of the *Inferno* appeared in 1954.

Purgatorio, canto VI

The loser, when a game of dice is done,
remains behind reviewing every roll
sadly, and sadly wiser, and alone.

The crowd leaves with the winner: one behind
tugs at him, one ahead, one at his side—
all calling their long loyalty to his mind.

He moves on saying "yes" and "yes" and "yes,"
and those his hand goes out to let him be;
and so he wins his way out of the press.

So did I move: turning my face now here,
now there, among that rout, and promising
on every hand, till I at last fought clear.

There was the Aretine who came to woe
at the fierce hand of di Tacco; and the other
who drowned while he was hunting down his foe.

There, hands outstretched to me as I pushed through,
was Federico Novello, and the Pisan
who made the good Marzucco shine so true.

I saw Count Orso; and the shade of one
torn from its flesh, it said, by hate and envy,
and not for any evil it had done—

Pierre de la Brosse, I mean: and with this word
may the Lady of Brabant take heed while here,
lest, there, she find herself in a worse herd.

When I had won my way free of that press
of souls whose one prayer was that others pray
and so advance them toward their blessedness,

I said: "O my Soul's Light, it seems to me
one of your verses most expressly states
prayer may not alter Heaven's fixed decree:

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yet all these souls pray only for a prayer.

Can all their hope be vain? Or have I missed
your true intent and read some other there?"

And he: "The sense of what I wrote is plain,
if you bring all your wits to bear upon it.
Nor is the hope of all these spirits vain.

The towering crag of Justice is not bent,
nor is the rigor of its edict softened
because the supplications of the fervent

and pure in heart cancel the debt of time
decreed on all these souls who linger here
consumed with yearning to begin the climb.

The souls I wrote about were in that place
where sin is not atoned for, and their prayers—
they being pagan—were cut off from Grace.

But save all questions of such consequence
till you meet her who will become your lamp
between the truth and mere intelligence.

Do you understand me? I mean Beatrice.
She will appear above here, at the summit
of this same mountain, smiling in her bliss."

"My Lord," I said, "let us go faster now:
I find the climb less tiring than at first,
and see—the slope already lies in shadow."

"The day leads on," he said, "and we shall press
as far as we yet may while the light holds,
but the ascent is harder than you guess:

before it ends, the Sun must come around
from its present hiding place behind the mountain
and once more cast your shadow on the ground.

Purgatorio, canto vi

But see that spirit stationed all alone
and looking down at us: he will point out
the best road for us as we travel on."

We climbed on then. O Lombard, soul serene,
how gravely and how nobly your eyes watched us!
how lofty and majestic was your mien!

He did not speak, he did not turn his head,
but kept his eyes fixed on us as we climbed;
he seemed a lion resting in the shade.

Virgil, nonetheless, climbed to his side
and begged him to point out the best ascent.
The shade ignored the question and replied

by asking in what country we were born
and who we were. My gentle Guide began:
"Mantua. . . ." And that shade, till then withdrawn,

leaped to his feet like one in sudden haste
crying: "Oh Mantuan, I am Sordello
of your own country!" And the two embraced.

Ah servile Italy, grief's hostelry,
ah ship unpiloted in the storm's rage,
no mother of provinces but of harlotry!

That noble spirit leaped up with a start
at the mere sound of his own city's name,
and took his fellow-citizen to his heart:

while still, within you, brother wars on brother,
and though one wall and moat surrounds them all,
your living sons still gnaw at one another!

Oh wretched land, search all your coasts, your seas,
the bosom of your hills—where will you find
a single part that knows the joys of peace?

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What does it matter that Justinian came
to trim the bit, if no one sits the saddle?
Without him you would have less cause for shame!

You priests who, if you heed what God decreed,
should most seek after holiness and leave
to Caesar Caesar's saddle and his steed—

see how the beast grows wild now none restrains
its temper, nor corrects it with the spur,
since you set meddling hands upon its reins!

O German Albert, you who turn away
while she grows vicious, being masterless;
you should have forked her long before today!

May a just judgment from the stars descend
upon your house, a blow so weirdly clear
that your line tremble at it to the end.

For you, sir, and your father, in your greed
for the cold conquests of your northern lands,
have let the Empire's Garden go to seed.

Come see the Montagues and Capulets,
the Manoldi and Filippeschi, reckless man!
those ruined already, these whom ruin besets.

Come, cruel Emperor, come and see your lords
hunted and holed; come tend their wounds and see
what fine security Santafor affords.

Come see your stricken Rome that weeps alone,
widowed and miserable, and day and night
laments: "O Caesar mine, why are you gone?"

Come see your people—everywhere the same—
united in love; and if no pity for us
can move you, come and blush for your good name.

Purgatorio, canto vi

- O Supreme Jove, for mankind crucified,
if you permit the question, I must ask it:
are the eyes of your clear Justice turned aside?
- Or is this the unfolding of a plan
shaped in your fathomless counsels toward some good
beyond all reckoning of mortal man?
- For the land is a tyrant's roost, and any clod
who comes along playing the partisan
passes for a Marcellus with the crowd.
- Florence, my Florence, may you not resent
the fact that my digression has not touched you—
thanks to your people's sober management.
- Others have Justice at heart but a bow strung
by careful counsels and not quickly drawn:
yours shoot the word forever—from the tongue.
- Others refuse the burden of high office,
but yours cry out before they have been called:
"Gladly will I make this sacrifice!"
- Rejoice, I say, that your great gifts endure:
your wealth, your peacefulness, and your good sense.
What truth I speak, the facts will not obscure.
- Athens and Sparta when of old they drew
the codes of law that civilized the world,
gave only merest hints, compared to you,
of man's advance. But all time will remember
the subtlety with which the thread you spin
in mid-October breaks before November.
- How often within living recollection
have you changed coinage, custom, law, and office,
and hacked your own limbs off and sewed them on?

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But if your wits and memory are not dead
you yet will see yourself as that sick woman
who cannot rest, though on a feather bed,

but turns and tosses to find some relief.

Ah, Florence, may your cure or course be brief!

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Paul A. Gagnon

The Future of America's Ideals: Three French Views*

I confess that in America I saw more than America; I sought there the image of democracy itself, with its inclinations, its character, its prejudices, and its passions, in order to learn what we have to fear or to hope from its progress.

Alexis de Tocqueville

AMONG THE RECENT books about us are three by French observers, Madame Simone de Beauvoir, Professor Jacques Maritain and Father Raymond L. Bruckberger, Dominican. The last came out this summer and has won the most attention. A Book-of-the-Month selection, with an excerpt printed in *Life* magazine, *Image of America* was even for a while on the best-seller list. It is also, unfortunately, the least rewarding for American readers who are looking for things they do not already know or for ideas they are not likely to hear from their own commentators. Father Bruckberger's book—except for his closing "Letter to Americans," which appears only in the English-language edition—was written for Europeans. This alone would be no fault. Tocqueville, too, wrote for Europeans. But *Image of America* is frankly a polemic directed against the author's favorite enemies: European Marxists and professional

* Simone de Beauvoir, *America Day by Day*, Grove Press, 1953; Jacques Maritain, *Reflections on America*, Scribner's, 1958; R. L. Bruckberger, *Image of America*, Viking Press, 1959.

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haters of the United States. As such it has some of the flavor one would expect of the Voice of America, in its livelier and wittier moments.

Father Bruckberger, an ardent Gaullist, arrived in the United States in 1950, lived here until 1958, and saw much of contemporary America. In his book, however, he confines himself to an interpretation and defense of American history, particularly of the two American revolutions of 1776 and 1914. In both word and action, Father Bruckberger finds, the first American Revolution remained pragmatic, moderate and above all humane in "its stubborn preference for men, for concrete men of flesh and blood, as against any political system whatever, no matter how theoretically perfect." To this he contrasts the Utopian, "all or nothing" ideology of the French revolutionists which, he holds, could and did end only in Terror.

The second American Revolution, Father Bruckberger believes, saw its climax in January, 1914, when Henry Ford, to the consternation of the stockholders, gave his workers an eight-hour, five-dollar day. At one stroke, by turning the worker from a proletarian into a customer, Ford overthrew the traditional capitalist system along with its rebellious child, Marxian socialism. From that day, the American economic regime moved rapidly and peacefully out from under the dismal economic dogma of Adam Smith, Ricardo and Malthus, which insisted that the highest profits could be gained only by paying the lowest possible wages. For this peaceful evolution beyond capitalism, Father Bruckberger gives nearly equal credit to two other eminently practical Americans, the economist Henry Charles Carey and the labor leader Samuel Gompers. To their modest reformism he contrasts the visionary and totalitarian ambitions common to the European followers of Marx and Lenin.

In both politics and economics, then, America's step-by-step meliorism has brought success and freedom to man, while Europe's infatuation with grander designs has led to cruelty and failure. However, Father Bruckberger chooses to disregard the

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highly favorable economic and political conditions which allowed our American moderates to retain control by satisfying the demands of the people. Surely, the very different historical circumstances of Europe's revolutions were as responsible for the failures of her moderates—and the subsequent rule by extremists—as any natural weakness for ideology. Moreover, in lauding Gompers' rejection of ideology, of political action and of reform through legislation, Father Bruckberger seriously underplays the role all three have played in forging the present American system.

In short, his first twenty chapters form a curious introduction to the stirring plea he makes to Americans at the end of the book. For there he asks us in effect to forsake our merely practical, day-to-day dealing with problems as they come along, and to construct an ideology and a plan for political and economic action on a worldwide scale, to carry both of our revolutions to men everywhere. Until its closing chapter, then, *Image of America* presents little that is new to the American who knows what he should about his own history. If Father Bruckberger's treatment of that history, in one reviewer's words, "makes one proud to be an American," it also may encourage the rather smug idea that we have succeeded where others have failed, simply because we have been more sensible than they.

Madame de Beauvoir and Professor Maritain, on the other hand, raise questions which, while making us not much less proud, may encourage us to be somewhat more thoughtful. Both, of course, are French, but the resemblance would appear to end there. For if, as Pierre Daninos has put it, France is a land divided into 43,000,000 Frenchmen, no two would seem less alike than the aggressive lady Existentialist of the Café de Flore and the urbane and most gracious Thomist philosopher of Princeton University. Their books on America are indeed very different, as were the receptions accorded them by American reviewers.

Madame de Beauvoir's *America Day by Day* was—outside of official Soviet pronouncements on us—perhaps the worst-

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received set of foreign opinions on America since the end of the war. Amid a good deal of indignant protest, one reviewer was "reduced to table-pounding," while another called her book an arrogant mouthing of the Soviet line. In contrast, Professor Maritain's *Reflections on America* was everywhere praised, by some with nearly tearful gratitude. It was a "love letter," the "loveliest of Valentines," "charming," "clear-eyed," a "tribute to America." It is true that Madame de Beauvoir is often hostile to things American while Professor Maritain is usually laudatory and always charitable. Yet, given the contrasting circumstances of their encounters with America, as well as their very different sets of mind, the two authors are not nearly so far apart as the reviews suggest. And beneath their differences they present the same inescapable question to Americans of the mid-twentieth century.

Madame de Beauvoir arrived in a victorious and confident America in January of 1947, while her own country, like most of Europe, suffered through the most severe winter of the decade in economic chaos and political uncertainty. Still in a self-admiring mood, the American press offered its patronizing sermons to unbusinesslike old Europe in tones redolent of Warren Harding's regime of "normalcy." It also talked much of the "Red menace" in the same worried but largely negative terms. Marshall's proposal in Harvard Yard was still six months away and the anti-Communists struggle remained narrowly military (and oratorical) as far as the world went. At home, the Congress and various patriotic organizations had launched their campaigns against subversive acts and attitudes. Into this atmosphere, Madame de Beauvoir brought her admiration of the Soviet Union, her suspicion of capitalism and its middle-class progeny, and her disdain for the unexamined life, however prosperous. Furthermore, she very often chose her American companions and informants from among the disgruntled literati, the Left wing intelligentsia and assorted precursors of the beat generation. By her own admission, she was not well informed on American history, religion or politics and

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saw no businessmen or politicians, no farmers or workers.

Despite all this, she remained moderately objective through most of her book, ready to enjoy and to praise. Resisting much of the anti-Americanism of her companions, she likewise avoided most, though not all, of the clichés manufactured by unsympathetic European travelers in the last few decades. Though *Time* magazine, perhaps sensing a foreign invasion of its prerogative, called her generalizations "unripe" and prejudiced, one might wait rather long for as much open-mindedness in a *Time* appraisal of, let us say, socialist Britain.

Like Professor Maritain, Father Bruckberger—and many others—Madame de Beauvoir was won by the kindness and good humor of the Americans she met. The atmosphere of generosity, trust and easy friendship made daily life agreeable; in France, she said, "goodwill such as this has become uncommon." Not content with the old clichés, she decided to enjoy the motion picture, the quick lunch and the drug store breakfast. Real jazz was superb, though too little appreciated in a nation deafened by Tin Pan Alley. The skyscraper, far from the monstrosity decried by so many of her predecessors, was a brave and dazzling triumph of man over matter. The immense material creations of America sprang from human dynamism, said Madame de Beauvoir, and not from the love of things in themselves. Americans judged a man not from the things he possessed but according to what he had done, what he had made, with his life and his chances. This was far from the mean little concern for a secure income that served as ideal for the petty bourgeois of Europe. It represented, on the contrary, a kind of rough and ready Existentialism of the market place.

Madame de Beauvoir resisted as well the familiar European idea that Americans hungered for power over others. While they might, through sheer size and weight, exert this power, they did not do it selfishly. Americans, she decided, are not hypocritical; when they invoke God and Virtue, they are sincere, they believe it all. What appears to many Europeans as

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imperialism, Americans see as charity: "American arrogance does not consist in the love of power: it is the love of imposing on others that which is good. . . ."

After nearly four months of travel among us, however, and despite the many attractive people she met, Madame de Beauvoir felt a pervading sense of sadness:

How I regretted that I could not feel more generously towards a country where the reign of man asserts itself so bravely and where the love for one's fellow man seems, at first sight, so easily achieved. Why was this goodwill which I had often felt around me so totally impotent? And would it always be so?

American good will was impotent, Madame de Beauvoir decided, first because it did not extend to the Negro. The American's dream of achieving harmony with himself and with the world "withered at the gates of Harlem." In the Negro districts of both North and South she found oppression, hatred and fear, and in most white Americans, a frankly racist attitude or a discouraged resignation to things as they were. Several American reviewers dutifully condemned her refusal to credit signs of progress in the race dilemma, and it is true that here, as in other matters, Madame de Beauvoir saw only what she wanted to see. That these things are indeed here to see, however, seems to strike visitors, Negroes and other minority groups as the heart of the matter. Even the otherwise patient Father Bruckberger denounces our delays and compromises as "not only contemptible but dangerous and grotesque."

To Madame de Beauvoir, Negroes (and Indians) were not the only unfree Americans. She reported to her countrymen that the American political atmosphere in 1947 was so oppressive as to be "impossible to breathe." With the press and public officials obsessed with the Communist threat, anyone with Leftist or liberal opinions stood in danger of accusation as subversive: "the very resemblance of democracy was fading here from day to day. . . ." Liberty, she declared, was losing its meaning for Americans. They were passively allowing the

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"ruling class," in its own political and economic interest, to limit the freedom of the individual and particularly of the writer and the intellectual. More and more Americans were deciding that Jefferson's ideals were no longer applicable to the modern world. For the good of collective progress, man must not be overly impressed with his individual worth, the dignity of his individual judgement. The American can be free, said Madame de Beauvoir, only if he conforms.

For her, the drug store, the super-market and the showroom held the key. The very profusion of goods was itself an instrument of regimentation; the incessantly stimulated desire for consumer goods, those outward signs of American success, bound the people to support the system. Abundance gave the illusion of choice and at the same time diverted attention from the self. Existence in America, Madame de Beauvoir concluded, was mass existence within strictly defined limits which were rarely questioned by the individual.

For those who felt malaise, there was always the psychoanalyst. She came to know many Americans who were bored, disturbed and maladjusted. Yet they seldom blamed the society around them:

They admit *a priori* that it is the ill-adjusted person who is in error. . . . They refuse to credit their own questions, their doubts and anxieties with any kind of inner truth.

Doubt might breed revolt, and revolt would threaten a society that displayed every sign—to the American mind—of having achieved truth and success.

The great men of America's 18th century had seen truth and success much differently, however, than did the men of the 20th. There resulted, she said, a divorce between official principles and daily action that marred every aspect of American life. Although the Jeffersonian ideal remained good form in holiday oratory, the great mass of Americans was resigned to its passive role, satisfied to trade wider freedom and individuality for the material rewards of the hive. American good will, Madame de

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Beauvoir concluded, was the good will of the happy, prosperous family; not a matter of decision or principle, but of circumstance.

Why were Americans, once considered idealistic and revolutionary, now content with the merely comfortable and expedient? First of all, she suggested, the American Credo has been proclaimed for so long as the supreme and eternal law, both natural and divine, that "nobody suspects that its earthly execution can have been modified." These ideals, so much respected and exalted, are relegated to a kind of heaven, while earthly life goes on, less and less affected by principles that would need much rethinking to apply to the massive economic and social problems of the 20th century.

Madame de Beauvoir saw little hope, in 1947, that we would carry out any such critical appraisal of American ideals and reality. The Americans she knew best, the writers and intellectuals, were too much isolated from society at large—and from each other. Promising writers produced one or two good books, then were bought by Hollywood and their self-consciousness stifled by success. The moving pictures, tied to the "interests," she found more silent than in Chaplin's day, offering a "conventionally cardboard America." The press blandly presented the American case in all instances, refusing to recognize the views and desires of other nations. As for the disgruntled members of the intelligentsia, fiercely keeping themselves apart from the orthodox, they appeared to her crabbed, dogmatic and drained of *élan*. She refused, she said, to credit their views of America because they ran it down too systematically. Merciless and narrow even in their views of American literature and culture, they were too ignorant of Europe and its problems to place themselves meaningfully in the world as it was. As for the mass of Americans-in-the-street, "nobody can do anything, for everyone thinks he can do nothing." The average American dissociated himself from politics either as something despicable or as a power well out of his reach.

Worst of all, fatalism and resignation also gripped the students. With few exceptions, Madame de Beauvoir found

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college youth apathetic toward political and social issues. Although many were serious and worked hard, almost none engaged in public controversy. They were afraid, she decided, to speak out against injustice in America for fear of being labeled radical or "Red" and thereby spoil their chances for careers in business. But even more important was the feeling that nothing could be done against the vast bulk and social pressures of American society. Students, she reported, readily acknowledged injustice—toward labor, the Negro and the Indian, the immigrant—and admitted, too, America's responsibility for the future of the world, but felt themselves as individuals responsible for nothing.

They think they can do nothing in this world. At the age of twenty they are convinced that thought is in vain, that goodwill towards men is useless and they say, or think, 'America is too vast, too heavy, for one individual to try to shake.'

Why not turn away, then, and be content with sports, social life and that practical, vocational training that would make them into smoothly-fitting cogs for the machine?

The universities, unable or unwilling to stimulate doubt, only confirmed this apathy. American professors, not themselves courageous enough to insist on a share of the control of their own schools, did not even try to lead, to teach courage, to act as spiritual guides: "All they can do is to serve the regime with exemplary docility." Youth, so often the source of vigor and imagination in the Western world, was in America left alone with its playthings, and seemed content.

Despite all this, Madame de Beauvoir felt that the battle for the Jeffersonian ideal was not yet lost:

Respect for the human being and the principles that guarantee his rights is solidly anchored in the hearts of the citizens. With them, one finds a truly democratic atmosphere and it is this which makes the country so attractive at first sight. No class hierarchy has been superimposed on top of any qualities of wealth . . . the rich American has no grandeur, the poor man no servility; human relations in daily life are on a footing of equality.

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Equality and freedom; of the two, the latter was more precarious in America of 1947. On May 25th of that year, an article by Madame de Beauvoir appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*. In it, she took up the matter of freedom in America and found another source of hope. Freedom, said France's second-ranking Existentialist, was real only to the degree that men were "committed to something," only if they pursued some changes in the world as it was. In this sense, she had not found us free. The young lacked a sense of personal accomplishment; they did not want to do great things because they did not know there were great things to be done. If Americans seemed obsessed with making money, it was not out of concern for self, but simply because they did not perceive any other objective criterion of value. Since neither American society nor American education provided other criteria, more imaginative or humane, hope for the revival of true freedom lay solely in a questioning of the entire American reality. Were Americans capable of it?

The American is afraid of that cold isolation, of that dereliction into which man falls when he splits off from what is given: from this kind of separation the drama of human existence is born; without the pang of separation the drama is not authentically human, lacking consciousness and freedom.

Perhaps the greatest hope, said Madame de Beauvoir, lay in the "uneasy hearts" of the ex-soldiers who had looked upon the face of evil. Or in the anxieties of youth who might somehow—even on the compulsively happy American campus—become aware of the "tragic sense of life." In the meantime, she concluded in *America Day by Day*, no visitor could remain unmoved by the great struggle going on in the United States:

America is one of the world's pivotal points; the future of man is at stake here. To like America, or not to like her: these words are meaningless. Here is a battlefield, and one can only be stirred by the struggle she carries on within herself, a struggle whose stakes are beyond measure.

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The American reader has almost every possible reason to expect Professor Maritain's *Reflections on America* to differ with *America Day by Day*. Where Madame de Beauvoir spent four months, Professor Maritain has resided twenty years; he feels himself a part of American life and culture. A convert to Catholicism, Professor Maritain is a prominent Thomist philosopher. He is a liberal, a democrat, in the Western (or should we say Atlantic?) tradition and is as suspicious of Communism as is Madame de Beauvoir of capitalism. At first reading, his book appears to fulfill the promises of its enthusiastic American reviews. It not only appears to, but does, say "America, I love you," as the *Time* reviewer so eagerly phrased it. On the other hand, it pays to heed Professor Maritain's own advice, given in the Foreword: "This book was not meant to be read in a hurry."

The author does not concern himself with either American politics or foreign policy, though he warns that he might not always be flattering if he did. Nor is he concerned with the daily existence of people as described in the diary of the peripatetic Madame de Beauvoir. He seeks to capture the essence of the American spirit, by a "merely personal, experiential, non-scientific approach," which he further describes as incomplete, subjective and disconnected. Professor Maritain is, of course, too modest. His book is indeed slim and "incomplete"; but it is also filled with the perceptions of a superlative mind which, for over twenty years, has been watching us very closely indeed.*

Some will say that *Reflections on America*, so complimentary to us, is also an exercise in Christian charity. Better, perhaps, to suspect that the teacher of philosophy has decided that scolding à la Beauvoir is bad pedagogy, and that showing us our virtues may encourage us to imitate ourselves. To the "old tag" of materialism, he replies that the American people "are the least materialist among the modern peoples which have at-

* *Reflections on America* is a revised version of three talks delivered by Professor Maritain at the University of Chicago in November, 1956.

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tained the industrial stage." He blames the emanations of Hollywood in part for the worldwide diffusion of the "materialist fable." He does not deny that America is infected by the "miasmata" of modern industrial civilization. Indeed he suggests that our casual acceptance of a loose sort of peppy pragmatism, in the guise of philosophy, may well leave us more vulnerable to a materialist contagion. But the disease is in no way specifically American. And like Madame de Beauvoir and Father Bruckberger, Professor Maritain finds less avarice, less hypocrisy and less grasping of money for its own sake than in certain European societies:

Here, on the contrary, money is cared for openly, because money is considered a means, and must not be kept but rather spent—for improving one's own life, to be sure, and one's freedom of action, but also, and this is fundamental, for improving the lives and freedom of others.

Again like Madame de Beauvoir, he finds that it is not money, but *work* which holds sway over American civilization, "the dignity of work and the fecundity of work transforming matter and nature." These he terms "basic verities" and considers it no small merit that Americans have grasped them.

Even in his chapters devoted explicitly to vulnerable points, he finds the hopeful and attractive side. Are Americans too anxious to have their country loved? Here is evidence of "a soul which lies open to the sense of human brotherhood." Are Americans inwardly insecure, behind their masks of radiant optimism? Here is proof that we do not bluff ourselves, that we are "aware of the awful magnitude and complexity of the problems in which human life is entangled." Professor Maritain has no doubt that America is on its way to solving the race problem, "in order to free itself of abuses which are repellent to its own spirit." This struggle with our own human infirmity "deserves respect and evinces . . . much human grandeur." As for our "silly infatuation" with the idea of sex, that too will give way to the "nerve and courage" with which we struggle against all of our malignancies.

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Clearly, Professor Maritain does not agree with Madame de Beauvoir that American good will is impotent. Moreover, he finds it not merely a matter of easy circumstances but the hardy product of a basically religious nature, "a certain hidden disposition that is Christian in origin."

He does not say that ours is a Christian country, nor does he say that we are "pious," as some reviewers rather piously suggested. Instead, he suggests that *if* a new Christendom arises in human history, it is on American soil that it will take root.

For this amazing statement, Professor Maritain finds several justifications. First in importance are the tears and suffering of the immigrants, from the Pilgrims to the present, "a stream fecundating the soil of the New World and preparing for America's grandeur." Here, he reminds us, is a distinctive privilege of America,

the deepest reason for the sense of mercy and pity, and the sense of responsibility toward all those in distress, which are rooted in the collective American psyche, deep beneath the hardness and harshness of the hunt for material interests and advantages which is the object of ordinary activity and ordinary conversation. This spark of the Gospel lying deep in the people who more often than not do not think at all of the Gospel, is not a thing that one speaks of.

Added to the spiritual significance of immigration is the classless nature of American society. Professor Maritain knows about the Bowery, the slums of Chicago, the sub-proletariat of the Southern "poor whites." Classlessness in his sense, he says, has nothing to do with the enormous differences in social standing and in wealth so obvious in America. Rather it refers to the fact that a man's position in our society is not considered to be determined by fate or heredity. Better, perhaps, to say that we are "casteless," and enjoy a kind of fluidity which permits, indeed forces, a "basic inter-communication, a universal mixing of men and ideas."

Like Father Bruckberger, he sees this good fortune resulting from the wisdom and moderation of the American political

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system as designed by the founding fathers. The system, Professor Maritain says, not only allows a most valuable grass-roots political and social activity on the local level but has made in America a unique relationship between religion and the state which, far from separating them, as in France, permits a "projection of religious belief into the temporal order." While he warns against the danger of what some have called piety on the Potomac, and against the greater peril that religion itself may become temporalized, Professor Maritain concludes that we have a better chance than most at preserving our original religious inspiration.

Not least among America's promises as the possible site of a new Christendom, he says, is our success in having passed "beyond capitalism." The inner logic of 19th century capitalism was everywhere "inhuman and materialist." There are, he admits—more readily than does Father Bruckberger—immense problems and forces yet to be faced: the power of big money, its alliance with government, the human sacrifices of depressed groups, the future political role of labor. Though the attainment of social justice may take generations, in America the road is open. It has been cleared, Professor Maritain believes, by the healthy growth in the power of labor, the changes in structure and attitudes of the corporations and the legislation of state and federal government. Though new attempts may be made to close it, he is betting on the success of our struggle.

It was precisely this struggle which first attracted the author to us upon his arrival in 1933. It was love at first sight.

When he who, meeting for the first time either France or America, falls in love at first sight, it is because he is confronted with a moral personality, a moral vocation, something of invaluable dignity, which is spiritual in nature, and which, I think, in the last analysis is quickened, in one way or another, by some spark of the Christian spirit and legacy.

His first impression was that of a fateful conflict between this "spirit of the people" and the materialist ritual of industrial

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civilization. 1933, says Professor Maritain, was a "drastic turning-point" in the drama that had begun with the reforms of Theodore Roosevelt. Since then, he has believed more and more surely that "the steady, latent rebellion" of our better natures is overcoming the "inhuman and materialist" logic of modern industrial civilization. Our greatest danger, he suggests, is that we do not know, or we will not admit, that we are doing it!

Americans, says Professor Maritain, are at the same time afraid of ideas and too modest to construct an ideology that will describe what they are doing. He sees two dangers here. The first is that the struggle may remain an unconscious one, too easily satisfied with the merely material aspects of social justice. The other, more immediate, is that America will remain mute in the world contest with Communism for the future of mankind—or worse, that it will allow itself to appear as the defender of the "inhuman" capitalist system it is casting aside! He, like Father Bruckberger, deplors the fact that our official propaganda, as well as obscuring our own reforming and dissenting currents, has accepted the challenge of Moscow in the very terms of Communist propaganda itself: Communism versus Capitalism:

That is a great misfortune, it seems to me, with respect to the rest of the world's peoples, for whom capitalism has kept its classical meaning, who loathe the very word, and who are not ready to die for it—nobody is ready to die for capitalism in Asia, Africa, or Europe.

Whence this inability to describe what we are doing, or to reinterpret our 18th century principles to a living meaning in the 20th century? Like Madame de Beauvoir, Professor Maritain chides us for being unable to stand aside from our work, to regard it critically, to think about its meaning. Our work ethic makes us regard any idleness with a kind of horror. Unfortunately, he says, creative thinking requires a good deal of what Americans call idleness. Also like Madame de Beauvoir, he finds American public opinion often hostile to intellectuals and

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complacent over weaknesses and innocuous conformity in American education. This last he lays to our kindness, which prefers to "train" happy boys and girls, at whatever cost to genuine culture and integrated knowledge.

Truly creative thought, especially if it challenges a given state of affairs, cannot be done in teams. And Americans, the author suggests, have a great dislike for anything that threatens to separate them from the community. Even professors seem to be anxious not to appear too brilliant or more original than the average member of the teaching community! The same modesty is responsible for the notion, increasingly spread both in and out of the academic world, that only specialists have a right to think—and then, only about their own specialties.

Professor Maritain does not ask that we manufacture an ideology for the sake of propaganda; he suggests rather that the development of a greater interest in general ideas and ideals among Americans is essential for communication with the outside world. Otherwise we shall run a great risk:

the risk of intellectual isolation, the risk of making American reality, and the greatest human and social achievements of the American people, non-communicable to other nations, and walled up in themselves, as long as ideology or philosophy remains far behind real and actual behavior.

It was not always so. He reminds us that at the time of the Declaration of Independence and the writing of the Constitution, America actively shared in the ideological movement stirring the Western world. This, he says, is what intellectuals are for. The great danger—and here he rejoins Madame de Beauvoir—is that too many Americans are either already too comfortable to be concerned or too easily convinced that the problems of their nation and the world are beyond the reach of the individual. If this is so, America will lose her contest with Russian Communism by default. Professor Maritain's final warning is that we must learn again to speak to the world:

You are advancing in the night, bearing torches toward which mankind would be glad to turn; but you leave them enveloped in the fog of a

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merely experiential approach and mere practical conceptualization, with no universal ideas to communicate. For lack of adequate ideology, your lights cannot be seen.

So it is that Madame de Beauvoir and Professor Maritain, through all of their differences in temper, in philosophy, in visions of the future, present us with the same challenge. America is engaged in a struggle for her soul. Upon the outcome rests the future of man. But not enough Americans know that the struggle is going on, and fewer still seem able to describe it, either to their countrymen or to the world. To Father Bruckberger, on the other hand, America's struggle at home—except for justice to the Negro—is already won. Although he agrees with Professor Maritain that we must make an imaginative effort to bring our language abreast of our revolutionary practices, he fears most that our failure to do so reflects a reluctance to apply those practices outside our own borders.

What Americans see as entirely justifiable action, or as eminently sensible inaction, appears to others as betrayal of our finest ideals. Father Bruckberger holds it a great misfortune, for example, that we were the first to drop the atomic bomb—and that we dropped it on a non-white race. Whatever our reasons, it only confirmed the idea of the colored and backward peoples "that the West is prepared to go to any murderous extreme to preserve its material supremacy." He reminds us, too, that the enormous wealth of America, however well-earned, is a standing affront to the starved and overpopulated nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

This planet of ours is like a nightmare ocean liner. In the first class, a few well-fed passengers live luxuriously in spacious quarters, while on the decks and in the holds all the rest of the passengers are herded together in hunger and misery.

Americans, he suggests, will never be able to overcome Communist propaganda unless they acknowledge its roots: "If you choose to ignore the world's grievances against you, your country is indeed imperiled, and with your country, the whole of the West."

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So far, Father Bruckberger says, America has neglected the role it might have played to present the world with its own revolutionary "third alternative" to capitalism and communism. Now time is running out. And he is "seized with despair" as he watches America stubbornly refusing to face the realities of its situation. To remain worthy of our heritage, we have no choice, he says, but to carry the American revolutions—Jefferson's and Ford's—to all the world. As a beginning, Father Bruckberger pleads for massive aid to India's industrialization. America, he suggests, cannot plausibly or honorably claim, even to herself, that her way of life is worth a hydrogen war and then refuse to spend what resources and energies are needed to help others share in it.

The Americans of 1776 knew instinctively that it is at the very moment when a nation is in danger of losing all that it must give the most of itself. But America's vocation goes far beyond the preservation of her own security. "Either America is the hope of the world," says Father Bruckberger, "or it is nothing." We have fatally erred, he concludes, in believing that the Declaration of Independence was meant for Americans alone. And only by struggling to offer it to the world can we become truly ourselves.

All three writers, then, beg us to recognize that American ideals are in danger—from lack of self-consciousness, from lack of articulation, from lack of will. Perhaps they are right. Perhaps this is why our official policies and pronouncements seem so often and so blandly to ignore the gap—clearly visible to our best friends abroad—between American slogans and American actions. As Alfred Kazin put it, in his discerning review of *Reflections on America*, so many Americans identify the ideal "America" with everything now American that we are driven to defend one on the basis of the other. This leads us to demand that others approve everything we do as well as everything we say we ought to do. Exploitative oil concessions, medals to Latin-American dictators, arrogant immigration requirements, emasculation of tariff and trade agreements, the bullying of

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allies—a nation conceived in liberty and residing “under God” can do no wrong. This, at least, is what we appear to be saying.

Our frequent confusion of ideal and actuality leads us into two errors regarding foreign opinion of us. On the one hand, we wrong-headedly assume that because others dislike things and acts American, they likewise reject our principles. They do not. Madame de Beauvoir, Father Bruckberger and Professor Maritain could not have made this clearer. They fear only that we have forgotten how to apply them or do not care to. The other error is to assume that others, particularly our European elders, are asking us to be perfect. They are not; they ask only that we recognize and admit that we, too, must struggle in the midst of our infirmities. For them, it is the struggle itself which makes us human and bestows dignity on the nation and its history. They say, with Robert Frost in *Kitty Hawk*, that the drama and the merit of Western man lie in his risk of spirit in substantiation.

Frost, like Jacques Maritain, is fairly confident of the outcome. Others, like Max Lerner in his *America as a Civilization*, join Madame de Beauvoir and find us in danger. Our enthronement of “Fun,” Lerner says, covers a “moral interregnum” in which the old ideals—still faithfully mouthed—are failing in practice and new principles have yet to be found. Similarly, J. K. Galbraith’s “affluent society” contentedly allows its ends and its values to be set by what it finds profitable to produce, rather than the other way about. Neither we nor our foreign visitors, then, appear to be sure of the future for America’s ideals. We can, however, know that we are not alone. And because we promise so much, those who watch us expect a valiant performance. In Professor Maritain’s words,

What they expect from America is: Hope. And please God that this crucial fact may never be forgotten here. It is possible to be more specific, and to say: what the world expects from America is that she keep alive, in human history, a fraternal recognition of the dignity of man—in other words, the terrestrial hope of men in the Gospel.

notes on contributors

Alvan S. Ryan teaches English at Notre Dame. *Joanna Ostrow* is at Stanford University on a writing fellowship; "The God's House" is her first published story. *Allan Brick* teaches English at Dartmouth. *G. Armour Craig* and *Leo Marx* are on the faculty of Amherst College: Craig is working on a study of the English novel; Marx's article is part of a full-length analysis of the pastoral motive in American experience. *Robert G. Tucker* is at Iowa State University on a Danforth Fellowship.

Leon O. Barron and *G. Stanley Koehler* teach English at the University of Massachusetts. *Arnold Kenseth* recently won first prize in *The American Scholar's* national poetry contest. *Maxine W. Kumin* is on the faculty of Tufts College. *Jean Pedrick* lives in Boston, *Patricia Coombs* in Waterford, Connecticut. *Jon Roush* is a graduate of Amherst College, *Cornelia Veenendaal* of the University of Massachusetts.

Edward L. Katzenbach, Jr. is professor of Government at Brandeis University. *William C. Harvard* and *Robert J. Steamer* are in the Government department at Louisiana State University. *Sidney Monas* is finishing a book, *The Politics of Russian Literature*; he teaches History at Smith College. *John Ciardi's* new volume of verse, *Thirty-Nine Poems*, will be published by Rutgers University Press in November. *Paul A. Gagnon* teaches History at the University of Massachusetts.

Leonard Baskin's drawings, prints and sculpture are represented in thirty-five major collections. His work may be seen in the current exhibition, "New Images of Man," at the Museum of Modern Art. The essay on Kollwitz served originally as an introduction to a showing of her prints at the Smith College Museum of Art.

Donald R. Matheson, whose drawing of Robert Frost appears on the cover, is a teacher in the Department of Art at the University of Massachusetts. His prints are on view in many museums, including the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Cincinnati Art Museum.

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in forthcoming issues

"The Autonomy of Despair: an Essay on Kafka" by *Peter Heller*; "John Donne: the Meditative Voice" by *Louis Martz*; "The Gnostics Speak Again: 'The Gospel of Truth'" by *Virginia Corwin*; "Diminished Nature: a Frost Motif" by *William H. Pritchard*; "The Affluent Society" by *Sidney Schoeffler*; "Massachusetts Politics" by *George Goodwin*; "Pope's Images of Man" by *Frederick S. Troy*; poems by *David Ridgley Clark*, *Richard Eberhart*, *Ted Hughes*, *May Sarton*.

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